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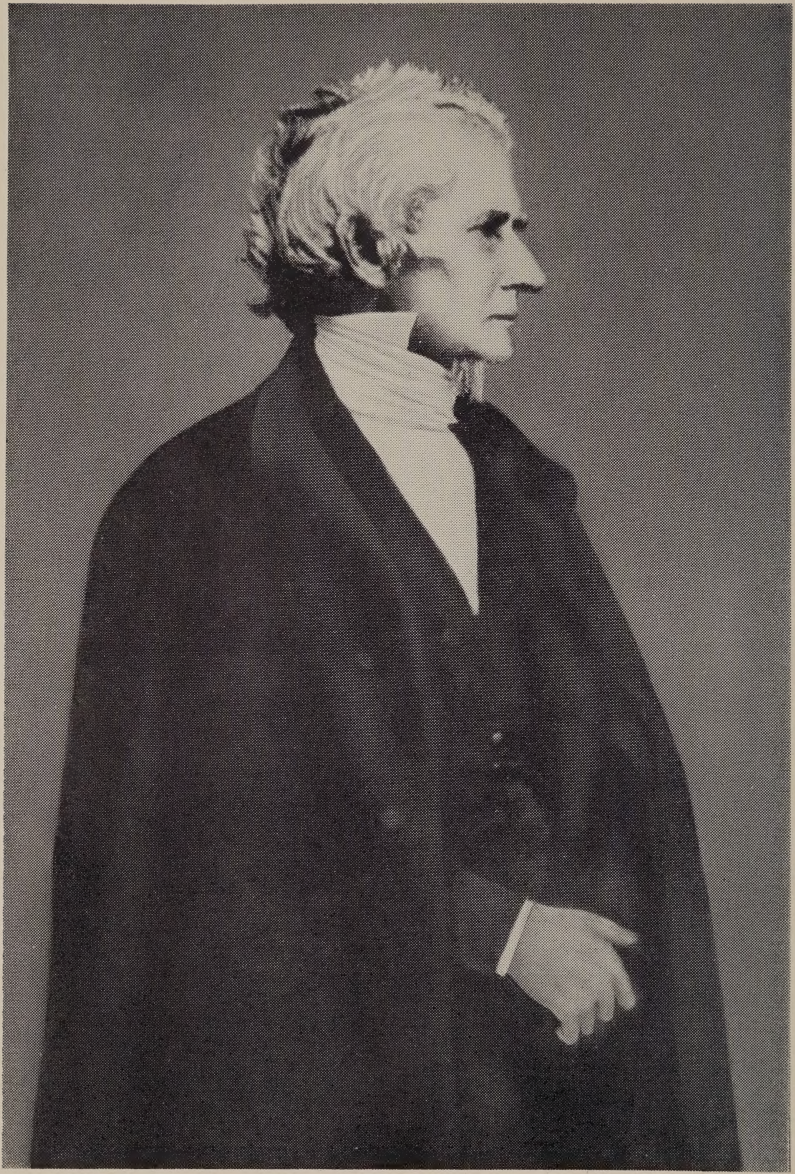
THE ENTERPRISING LIFE



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John McVickar

(cir. 1830)

THE
Enterprising Life

John McVickar
1787-1868

By

JOHN BRETT LANGSTAFF

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ALLAN NEVINS

New York

ST MARTIN'S PRESS

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DEDICATED
TO MY FRIEND AND BISHOP
CHARLES HENRY BRENT

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INTRODUCTION

The pages of this book exhale a dewy freshness: the freshness of dawn, of early springtime, of ardent hopes and undisillusioned aspiration in the life of a great city and its major institutions. They derive an ingenuous charm from the enthusiasm and idealism of the versatile New Yorker who walks through them: John McVickar, scholar, clergyman, traveller, clubman, reformer, pillar of adolescent Columbia, leader in Episcopal circles, friend of eminent men, and initiator of economic studies in America. "Prof Mac," as friends called the bustling Scots-American, tried to do too much. But this fact was all the better for his biography, which throws light on a dozen important phases of the time. Dr. Langstaff, whose earlier volume on Dr. Samuel Bard reconstituted the figure of a neglected leader in American medicine, made a happy discovery in the abundant papers of Bard's son-in-law, McVickar. The older man, physician to Washington, founder of New York Hospital, and first head of Columbia's medical school, concentrated his energies in one field. The younger man, restless, indefatigable, and inquisitive, scattered his over a wide range of pursuits. To follow his career in his graphic letters, diary notes, and memoranda, and in Dr. Langstaff's lucid exposition, is to explore the beginnings of many causes, organizations, and endeavors which have since become powerful.

Here is a New Yorker of the Federal and Jacksonian eras, active in the quaint little city so well pictured by Dr. John Francis and William E. Dodge in their reminiscences; the city in which Canal Street was long uptown, and Greenwich Village a country suburb. But Dr. McVickar, for more than most contemporaries, was a cosmopolite, a man of international acquaintanceships. As a result, the fare here richly spread offers much to different groups of readers. We have many glimpses of the metropolis from the time Alexander Hamilton still walked to his lawoffice to the era of the Draft Riots and Reconstruction. We learn much of European travel when it was still an adventure, and share McVickar's curiosity in seeking out people as diverse as the economist Nassau Senior and the memoirist Mrs. Grant of Laggan. Students of education will take interest in his hobby for the study of schools, like the famous Edinburgh High. For admirers of British writers he has left perceptive impressions of Wordsworth, Southey, Miss Martineau, and others; above all of Walter Scott, who received him at Abbotsford. Irving, Bryant, and Cooper come into his familiar circle. Churchmen will value the record of his activities in famous St. James of Hyde Park, in the churches and mission organizations of Manhattan, and in the improvement of religious architecture.

And how well McVickar and Dr. Langstaff, the one in his letters and notes, the other in his biographical material, have done by Columbia College! The long period of "Prof Mac's" connection with it was a term of pupilage and repression. Not until Frederick A. P. Bernard became president in 1864 did Columbia's growth to real stature begin. When McVickar took his chair in 1817 only thirty years had elapsed since the post-Revolutionary reorganization; the little institution on College Green had possessed scanty funds and a weak teaching staff; its best resource, the Hosack Gardens just given it and now the site of Rockefeller Center, were a white elephant valued at $5,000; and it had no real leadership. Of the years of struggle this volume gives us an illuminating view. It tells us something, too, of the strong men who came to be McVickar's associates, all like himself graduates of Columbia—Charles Anthon, Nathaniel F. Moore, James Renwick, and Henry J. Anderson. Above all, we learn of the beginnings and development of the teaching of political economy, in which Columbia was a pioneer.

McVickar has been a frequent but shadowy figure in the diaries of Philip Hone, George Templeton Strong, and Morgan Dix, always mentioned with respect, never fully described. Now the shadow is given substance and vitality by Dr. Langstaff in this work of long research and careful writing, a service to all who love old New York and the agencies that made the city great.

Allan Nevins

AUTHOR'S NOTE

FIFTEEN YEARS of research have brought me into intimate contact with the person of John McVickar. During the span between the war that liberated the American Colonies and the war that finally united them as states, his character, insight, accomplishment, and influence became so known and honored that at the end of his life he was called upon to help heal the wounds of war. If the charm and intellectual astuteness that made this man welcome in the counsels of the leading men and women of his time can in part be felt by the reader of today, the purpose of this book will have been accomplished. The manner in which he attacked problems that are relevant a century later, and his remarkably sympathetic approach to all parties and classes of people, should make him particularly interesting to the modern reader.

John McVickar was the protégé of Dr. Bard and the disciple of Bishop Hobart, whose biographies he wrote. The fields of the sciences and religion were to him unfenced areas in which he planted and cultivated the seeds of modern education, political economy, and Catholic doctrine. Stopping with Walter Scott, living next to Washington Irving, driving with Lafayette to the king's levee, arguing with Coleridge, participating in the deliberations of the London Political Economy Club and the Economic Club of Geneva, providing heat for the Alpine hospice of St. Bernard, visiting the Websters in Washington, teaching and carrying Columbia College through the administrative crises of fifty years, and finally at the close of his life presiding over a diocese which included a large part of the State of New York—John McVickar made his life count for the betterment of posterity. In his personal life he suffered many losses and discouragements, but he never allowed these to dull his enthusiasm for the projects he initiated and carried through. A surprising number of these have continued to grow in usefulness and size.

The background of this biographical history lies in two of my previous books—*The Holy Communion in Great Britain and America* (Oxford University Press, 1919) showing the part played by the English translation of the liturgy in those countries, and *Dr. Bard of Hyde Park* (E. P. Dutton, 1942) showing the part played by John McVickar's father-in-law, Dr. Samuel Bard, in the establishment of the first hospitals and medical schools in America. To the publishers of these books I owe an expression of appreciation.

For the rest, as will be noted by references in the text, the story has been drawn from manuscript sources. Most of these remain in the private possession of Professor McVickar's descendants, who have, in some cases rather reluctantly, given their consent to publication. Mrs. Theron Strong (formerly Mrs. Henry Whitney McVickar) presented me with her husband's assemblage of McVickar letters. These I have added to our Kedge Collection in Morristown, New Jersey. The staff of the New York Historical Society has throughout assisted in my research, Milton Thomas has given me access to the minutes and papers of Columbia University, and Dr. Hirsch, former librarian of Bard College, has been of invaluable help. Three Columbia professors, Allan Nevins, Richard Morris, and Joseph Dorfman, have read my manuscript through and approved it as an important contribution in their particular fields. Nor would I fail to mention Mrs. Fannia Weingartner, who has recently given me excellent points on arrangement of material, and Mrs. Bard Hoffman Langstaff, who contributed her services in typing the final copy.

It was Nicholas Murray Butler, when president of Columbia University, who suggested the compilation of this work, explaining that it was the first time these manuscript sources had been made available, and declaring in his explosive manner, "You write it and I'll print it!" I followed his instruction and regret that he died before this work was ready for publication. Nevertheless, through the courtesy of Ian MacKenzie and the staff of St Martin's Press, gentle reader, the story is now yours.

PART I

CHAPTER 1

The Setting

The McVickars of New York . . . The Bards of Hyde Park . . . Down the St. Lawrence and Across the Hudson . . . The Life and Art of Gotham

JOHN MCVICKAR's inheritance on his father's side was shrewd thinking and fair dealing. From his mother's family he derived a natural acceptance of revealed religion and a disciplined sense of duty to the community in which he lived. His self-training physically and mentally developed him into a fearless and independent thinker. He was not a prophet, but he started many things which later came to fruition and carried his influence beyond his own time.

The pale face of a boy peered around the counter of his father's establishment in Pearl Street, New York. He was a thin, sickly youngster who hid from people because of an embarrassing impediment in his speech. His mop of blond hair and inquiring blue eyes caught the attention of one of the customers who suddenly asked, "How old are you, John?" There was a pause in the general conversation as the lisping answer of John McVickar about to enter his seventh year was heard, "G-g-going into h-h-heven." [1] The raucous laughter of the bystanders and the continued joking about the boy who had said he was going into Heaven stung John to the quick.

Philip Hone, later mayor of New York City, worked as a boy in the McVickar storehouse. His diary recalls John McVickar as a child and notes that in those days his young friend "stuttered in the most painful manner." To conquer this affliction, Hone noted, McVickar set himself to work on the Demosthenian plan, reciting and haranguing daily, "his mouth filled with pebbles." [2]

The McVickars lived directly above their wholesale linen store, as was the custom of merchants in the unpoliced town of New York. There John was born on the 10th of August, 1787. This *Year of the Constitution,* as McVickar liked to call it, marked the reorganization not only of colonies and commonwealths in America but also the organization on old foundations of the Protestant Episcopal Church and Columbia College.

Only eleven years before this, in the *Year of the Declaration of Independence,* John's father, then a lad of seventeen seeking freedom from a stepmother in the Irish county of Antrim, had sailed for New York where his uncle Archibald represented the family interests. Three years after his arrival in America his uncle died and left the young nephew in charge of a growing import business. He was described as a man of integrity, "rather tall, somewhat sharp featured and looked like a foreigner." They were the characteristics of the border clan in West Scotland from which the McVickars stemmed before migrating to Ireland and entering the linen industry. Because no cloth sold in New York could rival Irish linen, fortune smiled on the soft-spoken merchant who soon came to control the trade. The high ideals for which he stood made him generally acceptable in the social life of his adopted city.

When the merchant married Ann Moore he imbibed her loyalty to the established Church of England, joined the vestry of Trinity, and interested himself in the beginnings of Episcopal parishes in New York. The family into which he married brought this ecclesiastical affiliation from Ireland, whence their ancestors had fled after Wyatt's rebellion against Mary and Philip. The Moores' first home in America was constructed behind the sand dunes of Southampton in the early seventeenth century. In time John Moore moved down Long Island to the more settled parts nearer New York. There he purchased farm land from the Indians and did the local preaching before there were licensed ministers in the district. It was his son who built the homestead on Newton Creek where after two more generations John McVickar's mother was born.[3]

From his grandfather Moore, still living in the ample frame house at Newton, the boy John heard many tales of how it had been burned and rebuilt during the Revolutionary War.[4] The

British general Howe and the admiral, his brother, had made it their headquarters, and it was there in the apple orchard that John's uncle Sackett had been engaged as a boy in a fist fight with the midshipman who later became William IV of England. In this bout with the prince young Moore showed such spirit that the admiral invited him to join his ship. It was there too that John's aunt Patience married an heir of Lord Dongan, at one time colonial governor of New York.

In 1800 John was matriculated as an undergraduate at Columbia College, and the following year his father built for his growing family a pretentious town house at 231 Broadway, opposite the new City Hall. Although he was only thirteen, John McVickar found the college work easy, thanks to a good grounding under the scholarly tutors to whose care he had earlier been entrusted. There was little student life as such. All Columbia undergraduates lived at home, and his new home was only one block east of the college grounds. Perhaps John's best friend at Columbia was young Alexander Hamilton, whose father had been killed in a duel with Aaron Burr while the boys were in the midst of their final examinations. At their commencement exercises McVickar was the first to deliver a eulogy on the nation's late Secretary of Treasury. There was an air of excitement in those small-town days of growing up in a country under a novel form of government; something untried lay beyond what was taught in the old college.

John McVickar achieved his degree with distinction in 1804 and spent the following year as an undergraduate at Oxford. On his return he read for holy orders under John Henry Hobart. Then at the age of twenty-two John married Dr. Samuel Bard's daughter, Eliza, and in 1811 was ordained in the Protestant Episcopal Church by the bishop of New York. With the help of his father-in-law he proceeded to build his own church on the Bard estate at Hyde Park on the Hudson River.

* * *

McVickar was most fortunate in his congregation, for among his parishioners were many nationally prominent families active and influential in the intellectual and political life of the time. So much so that as years passed and memorials were erected, McVickar's church at Hyde Park became known as the Westminster Abbey of America. The tradition was sustained, and more than a century later the President of the United States and the King of England knelt in it and prayed for a common cause. As the young rector shepherded these families, so, in spite of repeated tragedies, he cared for his own.

The autumn colors had come and gone from the banks of the Hudson in the year 1817. For hours a puffing engine and splashing paddles had beaten out a rhythm propelling a little craft down the broad river that had become monotonous to the passengers. In the faint light of oil lamps in its crowded cabin, one could distinguish a family of five children watched over by a mother and her maiden aunt.

They were the family of the Reverend John McVickar, and at intervals the youthful father would open the cabin door and come in to inquire tenderly about each of his flock, advising his wife Eliza of some headland sighted or river residence passed, marking their progress toward New York. For the most part, however, John McVickar remained in the prow of the vessel, his fair hair blown free by the cold November wind, his keen eyes scanning the high hills between which the river wound.

John McVickar had just been elected a professor of Columbia College and, although he had thirty years to his credit, he was conscious of his lack of preparation for so profound a responsibility. For the past eight years he had been absorbed in the stimulating life led by the distinguished river families north of Poughkeepsie. Added to the inspiring setting of the Bards' century-old estate high on the east bank of the Hudson was the exciting and rewarding companionship of his father-in-law, Dr. Samuel Bard. Into the life of the eminent physician who had led the way in founding the first hospital and medical schools in New York, the young McVickar for his part brought an enthusiastic appeal for the importance of propagating the faith of the ancient church. While Samuel Bard had never questioned the Christian revelation, he had never taken time off to do much about it until his personal contact with the religious fervor of the young student. It was so free of pious respectability, so genuinely a medium of a healthful power lying beyond the fields of medicine or surgery, that it appealed to the doctor's inquiring mind. This had led to his sponsoring building on his Hyde Park estate a church where his son-in-law could serve the scattered community.

The construction of a church edifice on the Albany post road a hundred miles north of New York City had afforded an opportunity for the young cleric to draw architectural plans and personally engage in their execution. When the Gothic structure was completed Bishop Hobart consecrated it St. James's Church and instituted John McVickar as its rector.[5]

First McVickar and his bride lived with the Bards. Later he built for himself an Adam-styled residence, which he called appropriately "Inwood," on an acreage overlooking the Hudson just north of the Bard property. Before long it became necessary to move his family to a cottage rectory more convenient to the church and more accessible to his wife's aging parents at Hyde Park. When the suggestion had first come of taking his family from these pleasant and healthful surroundings into the crowd and squalor of the city, McVickar hesitated.

Judge Brockholst Livingston, chairman of the board of trustees of Columbia, wrote the young rector of Hyde Park on August 8, 1817, that "by the death of Dr. Bowden, the chair of Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres in Columbia College is vacant. It has occurred to me that it will be a great acquisition to the Institution if your services in that department can be secured." Early in September Clement C. Moore advised his cousin John "parties running very high here respecting the vacant professorship in Columbia College" and assured him he would be "happier and more useful" where he was in Hyde Park. In another month Dr. Bard was in New York pressing his son-in-law's fitness for the post with such vigor that on November 3 he was elected professor.

The steamboat churned past the high bank at West Point, where after years of planning the national military academy was being reorganized under Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, stopped for passengers at Yonkers, and continued on under the lea of the majestic Palisades. After several hours appeared the heights of the east bank on which men could still remember making a heroic stand in Washington's Continental army, hills that were in time to be crowned by a Gothic cathedral and the peaceful halls of Columbia University. Two miles further downstream McVickar could now discern the columned façade of his late father's country residence just south of the Brockholst Livingston place in Bloomingdale. Finally McVickar could see the church spires of the little city of New York.

But now the river boat was approaching the grove of trees marking the college grounds. John McVickar had promised to call his wife so that they might share their first glimpse of what was now to be their new home at Columbia College. To Eliza Bard as she stood holding tight to her husband's arm with one hand and securing her bonnet against the wind with the other, the scene was full of associations. Her father had often recalled that as an undergraduate he was one of the first to use the building in which they were now to live. Not only had he served for years as a trustee and dean of Columbia's medical faculty but he had also taught chemistry in the same halls where her husband would soon be holding his classes.

The hopes and fears of the future lay under the long pedimented roof of the three-storied building among the trees. There was no beacon shining for them from the cupola to guide their way. They could almost hear the ominous creaking of the weathervane as the wind shifted from one direction to another. The primitive steamboat was approaching its landing, so John McVickar and his Eliza went below to gather their children and get ready.

* * *

The few years McVickar had spent in the rural surroundings of his parish at Hyde Park imbued him with a love of the countryside. Vacations were looked forward to by all the family as opportunities for escaping from the city. New York at this time was in a state of transition. Still primitive in many ways, it was growing rapidly and attracting many newcomers. Though showing great promise as a commercial center, it was now in economic straits. But its very growing pains made it an interesting city to live in and McVickar soon found a congenial group of men active in the arts and in politics.

In the two years following McVickar's appointment to Columbia over twenty thousand immigrants arrived in New York, bringing the population to about one hundred and twenty thousand—of whom ten thousand were Negroes. The unpaved streets extended only a short distance above a certain tree-lined canal until recently needed for draining the Collect Pond. Gas, sewerage, and other urban conveniences were lacking. With only a few volunteer firemen and hand pumps, the rows of wooden houses patrolled by a small force of night watchmen presented a fire hazard. There seemed little hope for an appeal to civic pride, especially among the foreign-born transients for whom there was apparently small opportunity for employment. The atmosphere was tense and unsettled.

For a time the formation of a "bank for saving" gave promise of improvement in economic conditions. Business enterprises began to pick up, steamship lines were started along Long Island Sound to New Haven and New London, and even the Atlantic Ocean was now to be crossed by a 380-ton vessel carrying on its deck paddles that, in case of calm, could be fixed in wheels on each side and propelled by steam. It was also proposed to build a suspension bridge across the river to Brooklyn. Then suddenly these undertakings, and indeed the industry of the entire country, were prostrated by a financial crisis which stifled economic progress for the next four or five years. During this time McVickar, with his keen interest in political economy, watched these developments, carefully studying specific factors such as banking and trying to arrive at some general conclusions on the interrelation of various economic and social problems.

With the onset of the financial crisis the material prospects of Columbia suffered accordingly. In vain the college tried to secure help from the government at Albany and to make a profitable exchange of the Elgin Garden property. Yet in the midst of the depression McVickar was proud to say that his college started its system of scholarships by allowing an applicant from Erasmus Hall Academy, where Professor Wilson had once been principal, to enter Columbia and "pursue his studies free of expense." [6] Also in July of 1819 the McVickar family were able to move into a "new house," changing their address from "7" to "8 Columbia College."

Professor McVickar was by this time comfortably settled in his rather commodious Chair, which included not only rhetoric and logic but also moral philosophy and belles lettres. To this he had persuaded the authorities in 1818 to add the subject of political economy. In this course he surveyed and analyzed the complex problems with which the community was faced. Moreover, his department of literary studies brought him in contact with many creative minds which stimulated his own.

James Renwick, who had been an undergraduate with McVickar and was now colonel of engineers in the state militia, was "offering to give a course of lectures or to take the position of Professor." [7] Although the business which he had inherited from his father failed at this time, Renwick had the year before married the daughter of the owner of the Brevoort farm, an acreage increasing in value as the city developed north to Eighth Street. This enabled him to give his services to Columbia without charge.

These were the days when Renwick's brother-in-law, Henry Brevoort, was arranging the publication of Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* and the last numbers of their *Salmagundi,* and McVickar was drawn into the excitement of their literary ventures. William Irving, whom McVickar saw as a delegate at Episcopal conventions, had glowing accounts of his brother Washington's literary success in England. Then too McVickar enjoyed the literary atmosphere at the home of his sister Augusta Jay in Bedford. A neighbor of the Jays, James Cooper, had read them the manuscript of a novel he proposed publishing under the title of *Precaution.* Even the generally critical Governor Jay joined with others in encouraging the new author.

John McVickar, with his sparkling Irish eyes and merry whistle, was affectionately accepted everywhere. From the college green to the world outside he became thought of as "Prof Mac," although he was seldom if ever so addressed personally. Moreover, he found he was becoming a center for inquiring correspondents such as Rufus King, who now sent for his consideration from the Senate chamber in Washington a copy of a memoir which he noted was "written by a young friend of mine in Massachusetts on the Pronunciation of the Greek language." [8]

In order to spare his family the city heat McVickar took them all up the river to Hyde Park even before the summer vacation started. On his return to Columbia he wrote his wife that when he "got safely on board the Steamboat" at Hyde Park landing, he found from the military parade and funeral decorations that "the remains of Gen'l Montgomery were on board—they lay in state on the deck—a rich pall suspended over them and three Sentinels passing back and forward barring all approach."

Richard Montgomery, an Irish-American general, had been killed in an assault on Quebec in 1775. Only three years before this, he had come to America, married a daughter of Robert R. Livingston, and was living a short distance above Hyde Park when he was persuaded by the Continental Congress to accept a commission. John McVickar had often had to listen to the praises of the family hero whose body was now in 1818, as an "Act of Honor," being transported from Canada to where his monument had long stood blocking a window of St. Paul's Chapel.

McVickar's description went on to state that "about ten o'clock opposite Bloomingdale we were boarded by an 18 oared Barge, bearing a deputation from the Civil and Military Authorities with orders to receive the Remains and land them at Fort Gansevort. Col. Richard Platt appeared as head of the deputation, David Colden as the Representative of his father the Mayor."

"All this was quite imposing," McVickar admitted, "but when Platt, who is a little cracked-brained, began giving an account of that unfortunate expedition in which Montgomery fell, it became quite ludicrous—he was himself personally engaged and the minutest events were recalled with all the enthusiasm of an old soldier. When the army advanced he illustrated their movement by advancing, when they debouched to the right, he would dash thro the crowd half a dozen paces to the right and when they retreated, the very sound of it put all behind to flight to keep out of his way. Thus delayed we did not reach town till eleven, nor I college until nearly twelve."

The summer vacations united the professor's family in their attractive cottage overlooking the Hudson, freshly decorated with fashionable striped wallpaper and calico curtains. Here Prof Mac could run down to the river, strip off his clothes, and plunge into the cool water, or trudge off into the hills with bait and line for fishing. Here in close proximity to the family at Hyde Park there was opportunity for many long discussions with Dr. Bard on the teaching of moral philosophy and political economy. Samuel Bard drew his enthusiasm for these subjects from his association with Adam Smith and David Hume in his student days at Edinburgh, and the fact that their findings offered insights and possible solutions to the very real problems created by urban life in New York impressed McVickar.

The doctor's failing health necessitated his daughter's remaining at Hyde Park. But when winter came Dr. Bard was well enough to preside at a meeting of the New York Historical Society and consequently Eliza Bard felt free to return to her husband at Columbia. They took a pew in the south aisle of St. Paul's Chapel and started life together again.

Professor McVickar's slender figure ploughing through mud and snow in his "large overshoes" seemed more expressive of determined activity. He left off drinking port or taking anything at night, but still insisted on Eliza providing him with "oysters at noon"; the evenings concluded with the usual game of backgammon. With his daughter Anna becoming old enough to have her "first dinner by candle light," and his wife expecting their sixth child, the living quarters assigned McVickar were insufficient. Others had the same complaint. The building committee finally recommended that the most economical plan would be to erect at each extremity of the old building a block about fifty feet square, each block to contain two faculty residences facing the college green.

* * *

McVickar's physical fitness had much to do with his vigorous spirit and intellectual stamina. He balanced the sedentary life of the student with outdoor exercise. Horseback riding and driving were a pleasure as well as a necessity. Horticultural pursuits and exploratory jaunts into the country were planned to take him away from lecture hall and study. He enjoyed swimming and archery and made a practice of picnics. But above all his daily walks on the Battery were a matter of physical discipline. This healthful existence contrasted with that led by other members of his family and by most of his friends.

In 1812 the elder McVickar had died, leaving as part of his estate a tract of some three thousand acres in upper New York State near the St. Lawrence River. After spending part of the summer of 1819 with his family at the Hyde Park cottage, Prof Mac continued on up the Hudson by steamboat to look over this inherited wilderness. From Albany he rode west through the Mohawk Valley via Schenectady to Utica, thence north again following a more or less beaten track over the divide to where the farm lands of the Constable family lay near Turin. There he was joined by his brothers James and Edward McVickar. His brothers driving a wagon to carry supplies and equipment and Prof Mac riding horseback, they proceeded down the valley of the Black River. "Being confined so long to a wilderness where the sight is bounded within a few yards by impenetrable forests," the professor wrote in September 1819, "gives a painful feeling of restraint." When they reached the point where Lake Ontario narrows into the St. Lawrence, they exclaimed with delight at the sight of this "mighty river." [9]

In the midst of this primeval country John McVickar ran across a Columbia classmate, Elisha Camp, who was serving as assistant district attorney for those parts. In his steamboat he took the travelers down the St. Lawrence past the picturesque river islands to Ogdensburgh. Their stay in the upper reaches of New York State was not all given to the hardships of prospecting. Along the way they found several hospitable friends, among them one who had recently entertained in his "castle" two royal guests, Jerome Bonaparte, one-time King of Westphalia, and Charles Lenox, fourth Duke of Richmond, who had been sent over as Governor of British North America. Finally, having accomplished the purpose of their visit, they started back. When Prof Mac arrived in New York City he learned that his three-thousand-acre forest in St. Lawrence County was in great demand as "mast timber." [10]

John McVickar's family went down with mumps and scarlet fever early in the spring of 1820, and later Dr. Bard's health became so precarious that when college duties were over Prof Mac took them all to Hyde Park. There he bought a smart "horse and gig" which enabled him to visit about.[11] His mother had just returned from Turin and was stopping with her daughter Augusta Jay at Bedford. It had been customary for Prof Mac to drive over to the Jays from his Hyde Park parish and it was still a favorite place for family gatherings with the seventy-five-year-old chief justice in the midst. What with "bathing, fishing and rowing," the young professor finally returned to Columbia in better health and was able to report that during his travels in the summer he found "the reputation of the college growing and that on the sure and honorable basis of real scholarship."

The state of Dr. Samuel Bard's health in the spring of 1821 again required the presence of his daughter Eliza at Hyde Park, and the summons which Professor McVickar had been expecting daily finally arrived. He left at once to join his wife and from Hyde Park wrote his mother, "Dr. Hosack will inform you of the heavy visitation of Providence which has snatched from us at one blow both Dr. & Mrs. Bard." [12]

Public recognition of Dr. Bard naturally followed. A copy of the memorial of The New York Hospital, recording him as its founder, was sent to McVickar by Thomas Eddy, the secretary.[13] Many letters gave satisfaction, and friends conveyed personal sympathy. Among the latter was William Cochran, whom Prof Mac referred to as "the first Professor in this college after the Revolution." [14] He told McVickar the great object of his journey from Nova Scotia, where he had been a dominant member of the King's College faculty for over thirty years, was to visit Samuel Bard. As the two men "drank tea" together at "8 Columbia College," Cochran recalled the days when he had served as headmaster of a grammar school connected with Columbia. The school had been discontinued, and this conversation strengthened McVickar in his resolve to revive the school.

The loss of both her parents at one time was a shock to Eliza McVickar's health and spirits and left her "very weak and thin."

She remained at the college with her family until after commencement. Then to aid her recuperation and with a thought of collecting material as a memorial to Dr. Bard, Prof Mac planned an extended jaunt together. They set out on "a circuitous ride thro Jersey and Orange County" which would enable them to visit "all the Friends we have in that quarter."

After crossing to the New Jersey mainland, Prof Mac recorded, "The first day we stopped at Elizabethtown to see General Scott and his wife." Winfield Scott, a powerfully built man of six foot five, was thirty-five at the time, a few months older than McVickar. After his service in Canada with the army of 1812 he had been made brigadier-general, and then in 1814 came the battle of Lundy's Lane when he had two horses killed under him. Overnight he had become the idol of the country and a hero abroad.

John and his Eliza continued their ride west along the Morris turnpike and made their next stop with John Henry Hobart in his summer home, noting, "That night we slept at the Bishop's in Short Hills." Their next friend along the way was the distinguished divine, Abraham Beach, now in charge of the parishes of Piscataway and New Brunswick on either side of the Raritan River. "That day we dined at Dr. Beach's near Brunswick," the professor's journal noted, "intending to pass on after dinner but such was the warmth of their hospitality that we could not leave them for two days," and added, "I do not think I have laughed so much in a twelvemonth as I did in that short time."

From there they "drove to Schooly's Mountain and on to Orange Spring near Newark." At Paterson McVickar inspected the "Falls & Factories," and made careful note of their economic significance.[15] The last lap of their tour of friendly visits took them through the Ramapo Mountains to Goshen, and finally they again crossed the Hudson River to Poughkeepsie. There McVickar devoted himself to "preparing a memoir of Dr Bard's life."

One Saturday in September he wrote, "I got up a long wagon filled with straw & took a load full out to a pond a few miles back of Pough'ie to fish—where we spent the day in high frolic. The only idle morning. I am generally near 5 hrs with my pen in my hand. About 2 o'clock I brisk off, take a dive in the river which I find wonderfully refreshing, shave, dress & am ready for our late dinner after 3. The afternoon I always have my gig up & drive some one of our invalides 8 or 10 miles—our evenings are enlivened with the organ & very pleasing singing & I sleep sound at night, so that for myself my vacation never passed happier nor more to the benefit of my health." [16]

Even after his return to the city McVickar continued working on the biography of his father-in-law. He spoke of "John Billopp staying with us writing for me," and expressed himself as so "much pleased with him & for copying my memoir I shall make him a handsome compensation." Prof Mac mentioned that "the additional income which will soon come to Eliza from her father's estate tho not great will be very acceptable" because of their "increasing family" to which had been added that year a seventh child, named Sarah Bard after the invaluable Aunt Sally. He explained that his now large family has required "another servant & we have added a waiter to our establishment." Also his younger brother Ben's expenses "must be paid for."

To further his brother's medical career, Prof Mac was going out of his way to curry favor on Ben's behalf with David Hosack. There had been a temporary coolness between the families when Dr. Bard had refused to name Hosack, his junior partner, as his successor to the presidency of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Nor was Hosack content when he was elected vice president after Samuel Bard's death. He had achieved wealth and position, however, and was contributing importantly toward the continuation of Bard's effort to establish Bellevue Hospital. Because of this, Prof Mac wrote, "with Dr. Hosack I am rather restoring intimacy that formerly existed" with the result that "he pays proportionate attention to Ben at the hospital." [17]

The following spring found John McVickar taken up with the publication of his father-in-law's biography, which he called *A Domestic Narrative of the Life of Samuel Bard, LL.D.* Anxiously he awaited the comments of those who had known Doctor Bard longer, if not more intimately, than he.[18]

Alexander Hodgen Stevens, later to become president of the college over which Sam Bard was presiding at the time of his death, wrote to thank McVickar for having "so ably delineated a character which can not fail to be studied with advantage by those who are entering the medical Profession." [19] As professor of surgery he assured the author that it was to be the first book he would place in the hands of those whose studies were under his direction. The former rector of Grace Church, Nathaniel Bowen, who had recently been elected Bishop of South Carolina, found "Dr. Bard's Memoirs most delightful and beyond expression interesting," going on to say, "I never before contemplated a biographical memoir that I so confidently believed to be true in all its facts." [20] Also John Jay, now in his seventy-seventh year, observed that McVickar's work on Samuel Bard had "done Justice to the merits of that worthy gentleman, and in style and manner reputable to the author."

From England Lindley Murray, who had been a fellow pupil with Jay in the study of law, wrote at length in appreciation of the biography. At the same time the grammarian observed of his friend, Dr. Bard, "He has indeed lived long whether we consider his age or the sum of good he has produced in the world; and his sun has set in brightness." [21] Murray, himself now seventy-seven, had in the past few years published a revised edition of the *English Grammar* which he once asked Bard to help popularize in America. Because it was well arranged for pedagogical purposes, it was to go into almost two hundred editions and to monopolize the field long after its author had died.

To these were added expressions of approval from many others, but four months after publication the rather disappointed author wrote his mother, "My memoir does not sell tho generally well spoken of, it will fall a heavy expense on me."

* * *

McVickar found it difficult to work in the "excessive heat and filth of the city," and when summer came was always anxious to get his family of "six children" away to the country. As Eliza described them in 1822, "Anna is very much occupied with school, she and Mary go together, the other children I teach at home. One is yet too young for her book, but Fanny who is only three years old reads very prettily."

There were certain questions of title following Dr. Bard's death which delayed the professor's departure. He wrote his mother that William Bard was with him "attending to the progress of his suit with Mr. Rogers & Mr. Hayward." It provoked his observation that "if dying rich leads to such endless litigation, poverty is a better inheritance than wealth even for this world."

Finally Prof Mac could write they were "all comfortably fixed at Annandale," their cousin's place on the Hudson some miles north of Hyde Park, where he was given "a delightful little study, filled with books & opening to a pretty view on the road and woods opposite." Sundays were always devoted to church activities, and in 1822, four days after his thirty-fifth birthday, he noted that he "preached on Sunday & in the afternoon organized their Sunday School into which Mr. William Bard enters with great zeal." [22] William Bard's son John at the age of three was too young for Prof Mac's "Sunday School," but thirty-eight years later at Annandale-on-Hudson John Bard and his uncle McVickar were to create a college which as part of Columbia University came to bear the Bard name. For the present Prof Mac continued to delve into his studies on political economy and to enjoy the benefits of a well-earned vacation.

In December 1823 the household at "No. 8" was faced with serious trouble. Prof Mac informed his mother in Newton that they had "been both busy & sick—& we have made every arrangement for turning our house into a hospital so that our Christmas is likely to be a dull one." He warned his mother against coming to help them because there was "danger of infection from which no one is freed, if the disease be as Dr. Hosack thinks—this new disease which has been ravaging Phila this last summer has now made its appearance here." He learned from David Hosack that it had "first attacked the medical students, sixty of whom are down with it." [23]

The professor's brother, Dr. Benjamin Moore McVickar, had returned from his grand tour of Europe just in time for the epidemic and was again living with the family at "No. 8." "Eliza yesterday set Ben up with a little tea equipage," Prof Mac noted, "to be independent for his breakfast of a stormy morning." How so large a family survived under such trying circumstances is difficult to picture in view of the general living conditions of the times—the plumbing at Columbia consisted of a college pump in front and various privies in the rear, the heating was by open fires burning wood, and candles and an occasional oil lamp served for light.

Of the professor's schedule during his residence at "No. 8 Columbia College" he wrote in detail to his daughter in the winter of 1825, saying, "Since my return I have resumed my notes on Political Economy, perhaps for the press. To these I devote all my leisure time after college duties are over and domestic arrangments attended to. Till nine A.M. is fully occupied, after prayers, with breakfast and a short chat around a warm fire, and a long walk to a cold market.

"From nine to half-past twelve college lectures, which fatigue me sufficiently to send me out of my lecture room for half an hour which, by way of relaxation, I employ in the correction of some pages of your sister's notes on history. There strengthened, with perhaps a biscuit, to boot, I return to my room, whence I am called to dinner, and generally again after dinner till summoned to tea.

"After that hour 'vive la bagatelle'—down with Political Economy—up with family amusement: at half after nine Aunt Sally and I wind up the pleasure of the evening with one or two hits at backgammon, while your mother takes her lounge on the sofa, and the day closes with prayers."

When it came to moving the family to Hyde Park that summer, Prof Mac described it as "an army in motion." They shared the deck of the river barge *Lady Clinton* with four hundred and fifty passengers and by the time they reached the landing where William Bard met them with carriage and wagon the moon had risen sufficiently to show them up the road to the cottage.

The McVickars had rented their former rectory-cottage to one of Eliza's relatives, William Allen, a grandson of the founder of Allentown, Pennsylvania. His wife had died and he had vacated the place for the summer, leaving them his cook and man, to which Prof Mac added his two maids. Also McVickar observed that he "left us a couple of cows & a horse & I have hired another so that we want not for country food or country amusement—horses are saddled morng & eveng & wife & myself are riders."

One of McVickar's recreations in the country was his pencil and sketch pad, and when he returned to the city he frequented the company of artists working in New York in 1825. He watched the progress on the great canvases for the capitol's rotunda which John Trumbull, the president of the Academy of Fine Arts, had been painting in his New York studio for the past eight years. To be sure, Trumbull was almost seventy, but Charles Wilson Peale was still painting portraits at eighty-four. John Wesley Jarvis had opened a studio in New York in 1807 where he had taken Thomas Sully in as an assistant—prior to the latter's departure for England. Two years later Samuel Lovett Waldo had come and still continued to paint in what McVickar felt was a competent but uninspired way. These men were now in their early forties, and among the younger artists was an apprentice of Jarvis, Henry Inman, who engaged to do a portrait of McVickar; Charles Cromwell Ingham, who was to do a miniature of Lafayette on the latter's visit to America; and others. These, together with John Vanderlyn the historical painter, were, according to Samuel Morse, "my competitors" in the application for the official portrait of Lafayette in New York. Morse had come from Washington in 1823 where he had been painting "The Old House of Representatives." [24]

John McVickar developed unusual talent in drawing and in time became a keen critic. There are enough sketches and architectural plans initialed by him to show his skill in design and his critical sense of art values. But what interested him most was art as a medium for teaching. Gothic art, he felt, had served in this way in the past and could do so again if properly revived. This was a radical thought in an era of classicism and especially bold since New York City was the art center of the United States at the time. Nevertheless, McVickar's fervent advocacy of a Gothic revival was to gain support from others. Eventually he organized a society and published a magazine which went a long way toward spreading his ideal.

McVickar's literary circle was widening with new acquaintances. Fitz-Green Halleck had returned from Europe and with his friend Joseph Rodman Drake was contributing the "Croaker Papers" to the *New York Evening Post*. Through them Prof Mac was introduced to the back part of Wiley's bookstore where he often found his friend James Cooper. The latter had written another novel, *The Spy,* based on a family legend of the Jays at Bedford. Its publication brought him into sudden prominence. Encouraged by this in the course of the following year, he started his *Leatherstocking Tales.* At the bookstore McVickar would meet such men as Samuel Woodworth (who had just written the first of his several plays) and would comment on poems like "The Old Oaken Bucket" which Woodworth published in his *Weekly Mirror.* Two other friends of Prof Mac, Guilian Verplanck and Charles King, were publishing the *New York American* in which the former's poetical satires of DeWitt Clinton appeared.

It was never the same old city. There were constant improvements, such as a new building in Wall Street for the Stock Exchange, which had outgrown the old Tontine Coffee House, and checkerboard streets laid out now as far as 14th Street; a newspaper called the *Courier* had rather shocked people by appearing on Sunday; the tragedian Edmund Kean, Edwin Forrest, and others were bringing better plays to the Park Theater and even a first appearance of Italian opera under the direction of Lorenzo Da Ponte who was being considered by Columbia as an instructor in Italian. McVickar found a common bond with Da Ponte in his recently published *Memorie* and had high regard for the man who had distinguished himself as Mozart's librettist before coming to New York.

"New York is now become an immense city," Audubon wrote to his teacher in London, Thomas Sully. But with the size of the city the population of the poor increased. McVickar was painfully aware of the children of the eighteen hundred paupers confined with their parents behind a stone wall. There, where Lindley Murray's Bellevue had once been a gracious dwelling facing the East River, the city provided a school organized on the monitorial plan. Though well-run, the school was crowded with about four hundred children. The almshouse was neat enough, but the penitentiary was in the same enclosure, men and women in separate apartments, both required to perform the same convict labor of "the stepping mill."

McVickar discovered an inevitable relationship between crime and poverty, and devoted some discussion to this in his new textbook on political economy. Employment would be one solution, and some new industries were springing up in the city, while in the slips were sloops and steamers with small brigs, and ships coasting to southern ports. New York, however, was almost entirely shut in during the long winter, with one stage a day scheduled for Albany and another for Boston along the post roads.

Up to this time the close of day in New York, as far as the streets were concerned, presented a "blackout" relieved only by an occasional lamp on a wooden post, often filled with poor oil and badly trimmed. Now, thanks to a gas main laid from Canal Street down to the Battery, Broadway made its first step toward the "gay white way" of another century. A residence was even being fitted with gas pipes, and Prof Mac looked forward to the time when Columbia College would be illuminated in this novel way. Added to this encouraging advance was the prospect that the economic development of the city would be materially aided by the recent completion of the Erie Canal, in which McVickar had taken an active interest. It was already bringing "droves of folks" down from New England.

CHAPTER 2

Columbia College Intra Muros

"Columbia Afloat" . . . Learning to be a Professor . . . Educational Advance on All Fronts . . . A College Commencement . . . The Professor and the Presidency

THE senior class of Columbia College with which DeWitt Clinton graduated in 1786 was understandably small, but gradually enrollments increased and the class of 1816 numbered forty-three. However, this progress was deceptive—for in the few previous years undergraduate enrollment had begun to fall off and McVickar noted in the three years after his return to Columbia that the graduating classes numbered respectively twenty-one, twenty-two, and nineteen. Thus it was not so much a question of fitting himself into an expanding institution but of dedicating his efforts to fighting the retrogression of his alma mater. It is significant that the three graduating classes subsequent to those mentioned above averaged forty-eight members, and the evidence suggests that the energy with which McVickar devoted himself to attracting and encouraging students had a great deal to do with this.

After the resignation of Columbia's president, William Samuel Johnson, in 1800, the remaining professors, John Kemp and Peter Wilson, were forced for five years to carry on the additional work of college administration. Finally Wilson protested to the Columbia trustees that his salary was "inadequate to the decent support of his family." The trustees' answer was that professors must eke out their livings by collecting what they could from students in their classes. Since no one could be found to accept the presidency under these conditions, Benjamin Moore had to assume that office in addition to his responsibility as bishop for the whole state of

New York. In desperation the trustees appointed three clerical members of their board—John Henry Hobart, then an assistant priest on the staff of Trinity Church, John Mitchell Mason, minister of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and Samuel Miller, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Wall Street—"to enquire into the present state of Education in Columbia College."

Thus began "the long period of discouragement," as Nicholas Murray Butler called the years between 1810–70. In 1811 paralysis completely incapacitated Bishop Moore. At his resignation the trustees agreed on a compromise by appointing John Mitchell Mason as provost to carry on the active administration of the college, and, as a nominal president, they chose the rector of St. Mark's in the Bourie. As an Episcopalian the new president, William Harris, fulfilled, to use John McVickar's own words, "the legal condition on which the college held its property from Trinity Church." [1]

The distractions of the War of 1812 were not helpful and Provost Mason had to continue his church obligations as well. Nevertheless, with a divided board of trustees and only four hard-pressed professors, one of Greek and Latin, another of rhetoric and belles lettres, a third of mathematics and natural philosophy, and a fourth of moral philosophy, he struggled with disciplinary measures to raise the standards of the college. The once vigorous medical faculty dwindled until in 1813, when the College of Physicians and Surgeons built their "very beautiful brick edifice" on Barclay Street, the remaining doctors were lured away. In spite of the provost's efforts, the enrollment of Columbia undergraduates began to fall in an alarming manner.[2]

"The deficiency," the provost explained, had been occasioned "partly by the pressure of the times during the war, partly by removals for the purpose of preparation for business, and partly by the dismission of some students and withdrawing of others from inability to proceed with their classes." Nevertheless he warned the trustees that "the buildings of the College are in great need of repairs, especially of a new roof for the old wing, which is so decayed and leaky as to endanger all the stories beneath." In 1816, the number of students having fallen to seventy-seven with a prospect of further decrease, Mason felt forced to resign. It seemed to John McVickar his failure came in mistaking "dogmatism for decision, violence for energy and laxity for mildness, forgetting that the only successful discipline of youth results from the union of steadiness with gentleness." [3] Whatever the cause, John McVickar later recorded that "the college sank in reputation as well as in numbers until at length, its very warmest friends almost despaired of its resuscitation." [4]

In this extremity the Governor of New York, Daniel D. Tompkins, instigated a movement to establish a new institution on Staten Island where he personally owned a large tract of land. A charter was drawn up naming it Washington College and strong pressure was exerted to have Columbia merged with it. Bishop Hobart, seeing this as an opportunity for acquiring the Columbia buildings for the use of his theological seminary, became a keen supporter of Governor Tompkins' suggested merger.

The success of the plan seemed so assured that on February 4, 1817, John McVickar read in the *New York Gazette and General Advertiser* that "when a Steam Boat shall ply between Whitehall and Staten Island, 12 times a day, which will be the case early in the spring, city students can go to a college on Staten Island at 4 o'clock in the morning and return at 12, with perfect ease, and at trifling annual expense." But in March of that year Tompkins went to Washington as Vice President of the United States and the plan was abandoned.

It was at this depressing point in the history of Columbia College when it was obvious to McVickar that "all seemed afloat, its charter tampered with, its very location thrown in doubt, and its course of studies made the sport of many crude speculations," [5] that Professor Bowden died, and that William Livingston's son, Brockholst (who was then both chairman and treasurer of the Columbia trustees) suggested McVickar as John Bowden's successor on the faculty. After due consideration by the trustees of Columbia on the one hand, and by McVickar on the other, the appointment was made and accepted by McVickar in a letter dated November 6, 1817. In accepting he trusted "by assiduity and devotion to the duties of the situation to justify the favorable opinion" of the trustees and indicated his intention of entering at once on his duties as professor of moral philosophy at Columbia.

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In his acceptance of the appointment to Columbia, and in his attitude to it, McVickar was greatly influenced by Samuel Bard's advice and by the latter's experience in having taught at the college. As dean of the former faculty of medicine at Columbia and now as president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Bard was very much aware of the importance of a sound *undergraduate* education. His enthusiasm and concern strengthened McVickar's own resolve to be more than just an employee of the college, and to extend his activities beyond the classroom to embrace the relation of the college to the community as a whole. As his influence and position at Columbia rose, McVickar was to translate into policy many of the ideas he had discussed with his father-in-law.

In joining the faculty of Columbia John McVickar was conscious of carrying on a family tradition. His mother's first cousin, Bishop Benjamin Moore, ten years president of the college, had died only last year at his residence in Greenwich Village. John remembered the benign pleasure in his long serious face as his venerable cousin had presented him his diploma. The bishop's son, Clement Moore, McVickar's senior by eight years, was secretary to the board of trustees. Also there was Nathaniel Fish Moore, a son of the bishop's younger brother. Nathaniel had graduated from Columbia two years before his cousin John McVickar, and had been admitted to the bar. He had now decided to go in for teaching Greek and Latin and was just starting as adjunct professor at Columbia.

The Columbia faculty to whom President Harris introduced McVickar at their first meeting constituted only three professors beside himself. Chemistry had been under John Griscom for the past four years and for the same period Robert Adrain had been teaching mathematics and natural philosophy. The latter, an Irishman who had fled his native country in troubled times, was now considered the most outstanding mathematician in America. And, of course, there was the senior professor, Peter Wilson, who spoke for the others.

"Pray, Mr. McVickar, how old are you?"

It was the question that had embarrassed John McVickar as a boy. There was an awkward moment of silence now in the faculty meeting. Peter Wilson, a man of noble presence with the patrician face of a scholar and a gentleman, had just published a *Compendium of Greek Prosody* and was twice as old as the new member of their staff.

John McVickar's predecessor, John Bowden, D.D., was sixty-seven when he died and during the sixteen years of his tenure as professor of moral philosophy he had published his two volumes of *The Apostolic Origin of Episcopacy* followed by another profound work, *Observations on the Catholic Controversy*. Although Wilson's high position in the councils of the Dutch Reformed Church were not in accord with Bowden's Anglo-Catholic stand, Wilson had a fine sense of loyalty to his late colleague. Therefore, when he heard McVickar's suggestions for expanding the courses under his jurisdiction Wilson registered his reaction by thus pointing to the comparative youth of the new professor.

It was not so much McVickar's fair complexion and ruddy cheeks, for Professor Wilson's eyesight was not good, it was the vigor of his fresh approach and a certain ingenuous assurance which may have reminded the old professor of the years when this one-time pupil of his had done so well as an undergraduate in his own classes. The thirty-year-old McVickar accepted his senior's rebuke in good humor and with an Irish lilt in his soft voice he answered the question *How old are you* with a retort, "Between thirty and forty." [6]

From the very start, however, John McVickar received the full confidence of President Harris, who was resigning his parochial duties at St. Mark's in the Bourie to give such attention to Columbia as his failing health permitted.

Before the new year the McVickars' plans for settling in at Columbia were interrupted by news from Hyde Park of Dr. Bard's illness, and it was thought essential for Eliza to go at once to her father. During her long absence McVickar kept her informed of home and college affairs, how he had "by engagement drank tea and spent the evening with the Pres. together with Mrs. Moore," saying the more he knew of President Harris the more pleased he was in being associated with him and the more credit did he give him for ability and energy of character. Again McVickar wrote, "I walked home with him today and sat half an hour with him—he always expresses the greatest satisfaction in my appointment."

John McVickar knew his wife would be pleased to hear "the Vacation is twelve weeks counted from Commencement—you know we thought it shorter. The approaching examination occupies a month," the new professor went on, "which will be a great relief from the preparation of lectures, nor will the attendance be tedious, being only from 10 to 1." He had determined, "not to idle my time there, but make it a course of mathematics & Classic reading by strict attention to Adrain's & Wilson's examinations, studies for which now I have little leisure."

"Tell your Father," the son-in-law wrote, "I have been obliged to abandon my plan of lectures & confine myself more to the duties of Tutor, requiring from the class certain portions of an author or a subject thoroughly & well learned—they are not yet ripe for the other, but I still have it in prospect to prepare a course of lectures for the Senior which will go over the ground of preceding years. I think that will embrace all that is important in my previous plans, keep up the dignity of the Professorship & add somewhat to the reputation & standing of the college—these lectures to be open, if not public, & to take up the various points of Morals, Rhetoric etc." [7]

Professor McVickar made a short visit to Hyde Park and returned late for his college appointments. He made his "apologies to the Pres. and found Dr. Wilson engaged with the Senior Class and the Bishop, Judge Livingston, Clem Moore, Col. Laight of the Trustees attending." The following day was a tryout of a new system for examining which McVickar had suggested, and he later declared, "My plan of the examination has done wonders, Dr. Wilson finished that day both Latin & Greek & what is more Adrain went thro his course of Philosophy this morning wh last examination took him three days. My Examination comes tomorrow," John McVickar reminded Eliza, saying that he "employed yesterday in preparing thoroughly for it." [8]

After the summer vacation John McVickar had returned to the city for the college opening, while Eliza stopped for a time in Hyde Park because of Dr. Bard's health. "I have just concluded my lectures of this morning in full satisfaction with everything but your absence," he wrote. The young professor expressed "a satisfaction at the favorable prospect before me. I mean in regard of the behaviour of the classes & my own power of commanding their attention & exciting their emulation." Among the students to whom he referred were Henry James Anderson and James Lenox, who in years to come was to endow a public library for New York. Another, William Beach Lawrence, wrote almost a century later, "To no one connected with my literary instruction am I more indebted than to Dr. McVickar, as I was in the Senior Class at the time of his election—it was from him that I learned the first elements of that branch of jurisprudence the continuation of which has brought me in the most flattering relation with the publicists and Statesmen of Europe—going abroad to superintend the printing at Leipzig of a First edition of my contributions to International Law."

For the present the professor's effort was confined chiefly to teaching. When it came to the senior year, he gave his class as stiff a course as they could take in the history of philosophy and in what he termed intellectual philosophy. He reserved a whole section for the subject of ethics, which he taught in its broadest sense as a science of the ideal human character. Finally he introduced his favorite subject of "political economy or the sources of individual and national prosperity," and before he finished he had put his students through not only "the study of Economics" but also "the Principles of International Law."

The professor was encouraged when the Columbia trustees saw fit to recognize his services with the degree of A.M. Further, they promised him more adequate accommodation when Peter Wilson retired, and eventually he could tell Eliza that "Dr. Wilson's house is nearly ready, he will remove in the course of the next week." He suggested they would find it "rather more convenient than our last—the paper below is quite neat."

* * *

In his concern with the fate of Columbia College, McVickar soon found that he must interest himself in all aspects and levels of education, from the elementary schools to the graduate schools. Moreover, the paucity of the former soon involved him in a number of endeavors to supplement the few public schools in the city by the establishment of additional private schools. Thus he was to be instrumental in the founding both of the Grace Church School and of the Columbia Grammar School. At the same time he worked out a plan for a law department which was to become an early step in Columbia's development toward university status.

The obstacle to any further development of the system of advanced education in New York lay in the lack of preparatory schools. The new school his brother Archi McVickar was building in Broome Street had given Prof Mac courage to press for a revival of the elementary school that had originally been connected with Columbia. The rector of Grace Church, Mayhew Wainwright, who was about to become a Columbia trustee, was willing to cooperate. Finally in December of 1823 John McVickar, Henry Brevoort, and other parishioners of Grace Church arranged with the vestry to organize "a male charity school of forty boys." The professor agreed to assume the responsibility of superintendent. His mother and a "board of ladies" undertook the promotion of its financial interests.[9]

Next to the McVickars in the Columbia buildings lived Charles Anthon, an imposing figure, tall and strongly built, whose black eyes seemed to punctuate his large head. Perhaps because he had no political or religious associations he had few familiar friends and made a custom of walking alone after dark. There was, however, a common interest between the two professors. They were both impressed with the need for elementary education to rectify the unequal and generally inadequate preparation of candidates for college.

Though it was decided to transform Professor McVickar's "parochial school for 40 boys" at Grace Church into a choir school for "the promotion of Psalmody," nevertheless steps were also taken to fill the need for college preparatory schools. Before long there was noted in the "college papers" a "plan of a New York High School to be attached to Columbia College." [10]

It was not long after John McVickar's graduation from college that certain leading citizens resolved to make a definite start in the matter of public education. They met at the home of John Murray II, and there in Pearl Street on February 9, 1805, the merchant McVickar and a few of his friends organized a Public School Society, with the mayor of the city, DeWitt Clinton, as president. By the time Prof Mac had come to teach at Columbia the society had changed its name to the Free School Society of the City of New York and was functioning in several centers. In years to come it was to develop into the gigantic public school system of a greater New York.

This emphasis on education was accepted by McVickar as part of the responsibility of the Episcopal Church in New York. As early as 1709 the church had endowed a "Public School" and a century later Trinity was adding to its original bequest eight or nine city blocks. To be sure the Dutch and Presbyterians also had Charity Schools where poor children could receive free instruction and clothing, and the Friends a Free School for "black" children, but a parochial system seemed to McVickar to belong naturally to the Episcopal Church with its English heritage. Bishop Hobart had first impressed McVickar with the importance of education through church schools in preparing him for Holy Orders and in those days one of Hobart's most ardent followers of Catholic practices in the Episcopal Church opened a small school in New York City. This pioneer in parochial education, Elizabeth Bayley Seton, a convert to Roman Catholicism, is credited with having founded the Roman Catholic school system in America.[11]

Along with his activity in establishing church schools, John McVickar persisted in the idea of a preparatory school for Columbia College and was encouraged in it by President Harris, who finally "presented the plan of a grammar school." The trustees thereupon resolved that "a Grammar School be established under the Board of Columbia College when forty students are enrolled." [12] This followed the pattern of the "parochial school for 40 boys" which McVickar had started some time before at Grace Church.

To further the development of this proposed grammar school, McVickar kept up a continual exchange of ideas with other experimenters in secondary education, especially in New England. George Bancroft had returned there after studying in Germany to establish the Round Hill School at Northampton. At this institution, which came to be considered the "first serious effort made in the United States to elevate secondary education to its rightful place," the future historian and diplomat was himself teaching. In the course of their correspondence he sent McVickar a book on the subject, inscribing on the flyleaf, "Professor McVickar, with the regards & respects of Geo. Bancroft, March, 1828." [13]

This was the year in which McVickar resolved to do what he could to advance Trinity's public school into an efficient preparatory institution. To this end he not only assumed the responsibility of trusteeship but also became "Official Visitor" and served as chairman of the Trinity school committee.

DeWitt Clinton, who had cooperated with Prof Mac's father in the cause of elementary education, had continued to encourage the professor. In the spring of 1826 the governor had addressed the alumni of his college on the importance of secondary schools. Clinton had compared "the national school society of Gt. Britain" which at that time was educating "but 300,000 children annually" with the educational setup in New York State alone where there were "colleges of 437 students, 33 incorporate academies of 2,440 students, 8,144 common schools of 431,601 students, and private institutions" which increased this number to "at least 460,000." He referred to the president of Columbia and all the professors as being "now indiginous plants," and declared that "since the college has been under professors of native growth it has experienced its present fulness of prosperity." [14] Clinton had written McVickar within nine days of his death expressing "my respect for you," and offering further cooperation.[15]

Professor McVickar's services in the cause of education were recognized in 1825 by Columbia's award to him of an honorary D.D. At the same time an LL.D. was given his cousin Nathaniel Moore and to two noted statesmen, the recently elected Vice President of the United States, John Caldwell Calhoun, and Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was being sent to Mexico as the first United States minister.

Ever since James Kent had started practicing law in Poughkeepsie, he had been a familiar figure in Hyde Park circles. His widely separated eyes, peering out from beneath the high brow of a head which seemed too large for his small body, had always met McVickar's with friendliness during his pastorate. He had been an encouragement in McVickar's early study of Blackstone and later at Columbia in his lecturing on "international law." Now, when at the age of sixty Kent was retired from the New York court of chancery, his chair as professor of law at Columbia had been in abeyance for more than twenty years. McVickar at this point urged its restoration as a first step in creating a graduate school of law. While tying it securely to the college corporation, McVickar's plan was careful to provide that it should not overshadow and so embarrass the administration of the undergraduate body itself. With this in mind he noted that "As this law professorship will probably serve as a precedent for connecting with the college other graduate courses of study, it requires consideration to place it under such guards that it may not interfere with the good order and discipline of the institution."

His proposal went on to read, "To prevent the degradation of the existing college course, the course of law should be based upon it, thus making the former necessary, this being regarded as a graduate course, taking up the student where the subgraduate one has left him. But though ostensibly intended for graduates of the college, it need not in practice be restricted to them. It is not sufficent that this lectureship be added to the college; it must be ingrafted into it. It must be made part of a great whole so as to unite aptly with it, and have a common interest and common feelings." [16] Although Columbia gladly reappointed Kent as professor of law, this was not yet the law school for which McVickar was working. It was, however, a beginning.

In 1826 Lieutenant Governor Tallmadge sent McVickar a report made to the regents of the university concerning the College of Physicians and Surgeons. It was not only because there were at the close some thoughts on "the more immediate application of the sciences to manufacturing, industry & the improvement of mechanics," but he also called it to the professor's attention because, as he wrote, "it is upon a local matter so near you." [17]

The medical school building which Prof Mac passed often as he went into the city was a constant reminder of Samuel Bard's conception of a college linked with graduate schools. As dean of the medical faculty of Columbia, Bard had recognized undergraduate college training as essential to the specialized study of medicine and surgery. He had accepted the position of president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons with a hope of preserving that tie even under the expediency of separate organization.

McVickar knew with what bitter disappointment Hosack had been serving as vice president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons for the past four years under Dr. Wright Post. "From and after the memorable ides of March 1820," Hosack complained, "we date the decline and fall of the Coll of P. & S." [18] It was not until now, when Hosack failed a second time to secure the presidency and Dr. John Watts (secundus) was elected to head the College of Physicians and Surgeons, that Hosack resigned, taking with him some of the best men on the faculty.

Early that spring Dr. Hosack returned from prospecting for a site for a new medical school outside the city limits. Since, as he noted, there was already the medical school in upstate New York at Fairfield, called the Western College of Physicians and Surgeons, he had been forced to look in New Jersey. But now Columbia seemed more inclined to cooperate with the original College of Physicians and Surgeons and offered them the use of the college hall for conferring degrees. Therefore Professor McVickar met Hosack with the proposition that they try to revive Dr. Bard's ideal of a medical school connected with Columbia.

Accordingly there appeared in the Columbia trustees' minutes the record of a communication signed by Hosack together with the Drs. Valentine Mott, John Wakefield Francis, and the Irish exile William James MacNeven. They proposed that if a "Faculty of Medicine managing its own concerns" were added to Columbia they would return, allowing "Col. Coll to confer degrees." [19]

The communication called attention to the fact that "if Col. Coll revived its faculty of physik & created a faculty of law it would be constitued a university." The tabling of this suggestion was as much a blow to John McVickar as it was to the doctors. These men who might have established a graduate school of medicine in Columbia went to New Jersey and created a new school in New Brunswick on the banks of the Raritan River, with the understanding that in it "the professors may discharge all the duties which the interests of the institution require." There they also succeeded in obtaining the "patronage and protection of a neighbouring sect of learning (Rutgers College) by an alliance constituting them the Medical Faculty of that Institution." [20]

McVickar had serious misgivings about the success of a medical school so far removed from a hospital which to his father-in-law's mind had been an essential part of such a teaching institution. The New York Hospital had been progressing satisfactorily, while Bellevue Hospital could now boast a new building. The current volume, *Memoirs of Lindley Murray,* the author of which had just died in England, described the property when it had been his country seat. After Murray's leaving America the land had passed to Brockholst Livingston, and it was Dr. Samuel Bard who had moved to purchase it for the city hospital in 1794 when he was dean of the medical faculty of Columbia.

Apart from his interest in professional graduate schools, McVickar constantly pressed for an expansion of Columbia's activities to serve the city more generally, and in some way to incorporate to this end the abilities of men of science and art residing in New York. His suggestion found little sympathy with the college trustees. However, they had embarked on a construction plan which included the erection of a building to house a library with shelves jutting out from the walls, and above it a chapel with a strange hanging gallery accessible by an outside staircase. In both library and chapel the professor showed great personal concern as essentials in the development of the college.

A letter from his youngest brother, Benjamin McVickar, who had gone to England after receiving his M.D. degree, noted that "a plan of a great Metropolitan University is in agitation of which the great advocates are Mr. Brougham & Thomas Campbell. It is thought well of by some whom I have conversed with," he went on to write, "though ridiculed by the members of the old institutions whose influence may very possibly prevent the plan being carried into effect." [21] The plans for this future University of London seemed at first so in keeping with ideals McVickar had set himself to realize for Columbia that he expressed intense interest and eagerly continued to follow the evolution of the English project.

* * *

In little more than a decade John McVickar had grown from an inexperienced junior teacher in an insecure college to a dominant administrator in a potential university. He had met with opposition from the time when Dr. Bard had used his powerful influence to force his son-in-law's election. From then on McVickar had used his own driving personality to put through reforms which, to the chagrin of his opponents, had often been successful. He did not hesitate to make enemies when he felt his cause was right. His manner was brusque and dictatorial, although tempered by courtesy and justified by conviction.

Among McVickar's offences was the fact that he did not limit his activities to the professional duty to which he had been assigned. Trustees might easily resent his promotion of preparatory schools and graduate departments, especially if they found it less troublesome just to preserve the *status quo*. They might suggest the professor was neglecting his classes and complain that if McVickar's policies were not checked the exclusive school which Columbia had been might become a public institution.

Probably the chief cause of opposition at this time stemmed from the fact that McVickar inherited, indeed embodied, the Hobart tradition, a pastor-priest in the "P. E. Church," consistently Catholic yet engagingly Evangelical. Against this stood the unflinching Dutch Protestantism of the Presbyterians. Rather than risk attacking Bishop Hobart it was safer to take it out on his protégé, especially now that McVickar had come into a prominence far exceeding his actual position as a humble professor.

The college commencement of 1829 was a momentous one for John McVickar. On August 4 he had been declared "Acting President" because William Harris was now completely incapacitated. Three days after his appointment Prof Mac wrote his son, Samuel Bard McVickar, who had entered Columbia that year as an undergraduate, "You have seen, I suppose, by the paper that the Commencement passed off well, for which I was very thankful as all the responsibility rested upon me." He went on to describe how they had had to walk through a drizzle from the college to the broad steps of the Episcopal Church in Varick Street, and how when they came out between the columns of the pedimented porch it poured. Notwithstanding the day, St. John's Church was crowded.

It was not without apprehension that he appeared in this official way before the public. He had to face opposition, some of it personal from certain humiliated families whose sons had failed to pass their examinations, but much of it on principle from people who disagreed with his policy of administration, people who were set to prevent his ever becoming president of Columbia.

These were matters he tried to disregard at the time, but to his son he admitted, "I was afraid I should have trouble," and then went on to tell how, "soon after we got in, Dugan the janitor, on whom I depended for sending orders, said he was so ill he must go home,—and went."

The result was—or conceivably it was the mischief of some ill-wishers—that the constables kept no order; ladies crowded into the students' seats, and they began to clap violently at the end of the very first speech.

Bard McVickar knew how controlled his father's temper was, but he also had experienced the power of his indignation, and it was with some amusement he read how his father quitted the pulpit, sent for the head constable, and told him if there were any repetition of the disorder, he would strike off half the pay they were to receive.

It was almost as though the acting president knew they had been bribed to allow the disturbance, for this made them alert and the greatest order prevailed to the close.

The boy could picture his father standing in the vast interior of the stately church. His erect posture gave the impression of his being taller than he really was. His high broad forehead was framed by carefully tousled hair that almost covered his ears. The kindly blue eyes looked out at the rest of the world just as they looked at his own children. They seemed long and narrow, perhaps because the upper lids slanted slightly away from the pronounced Roman nose. His generosity was evident in a wide mouth with the rather long upper lip of an Irishman and a lower lip which must have been protruding rather unpleasantly now, as it always did when he was annoyed. His square chin, clean-shaven but emphasized by a fashionable goatee protruding under it, befitted a fighting man of endless patience.

His dress was always black, of course, dignified and meticulous, the linen stock with unusually high points, the white string tie and plain ribbed shirt never soiled or mussed. He generally wore a long coat with broad satin lapels, and the corners of a handkerchief projected from the breast pocket. His deep-cut waistcoat also had broad lapels. A long watch chain, passing through the second hole of a four-buttoned waistcoat into a pocket where all the children knew it attached to the heavy gold case of a watch, was the only glitter about his father's professorial garb, except for the glasses which folded as one and hung on a cord.

No wonder then that Prof Mac wrote, "You would have smiled to have seen me in my doctor's dress, with square cap and scarlet hood, conferring degrees."

The four recipients of honorary degrees had personal significance for John McVickar. They were his cousin Clement Moore, professor of the General Seminary and for the past fifteen years secretary of the Columbia trustees, and McVickar's college and club confrere, James Renwick, both to receive LL.Ds. A D.D. was awarded to Jackson Kemper, a former Columbia undergraduate whom McVickar was soon to champion in his pioneering career as bishop of the "Northwest," and an LL.D. to his boyhood companion who was destined to be his next-door neighbor in their latter years, Washington Irving. This was granted in absentia because Irving was in Spain gathering material for his *Conquest of Granada.*

"I got through the ceremonials and the Latin, fortunately," he wrote to his son (who was just beginning classics at Columbia) "without a false step or a false quantity, and was congratulated by all friends."

He introduced an alteration in the ceremony which was much approved as far as he knew, though to some it was suggestive of unwelcome changes which were sure to follow should he become president. However, later in the afternoon with the mayor, William Paulding, Sir Hilgrove Turner, and several other strangers of distinction, they all sat down to what McVickar declared was "the largest and pleasantest Commencement dinner I have ever known." [22]

* * *

The protracted illness of William Harris brought before the Columbia trustees the problem of his successor to the presidency. McVickar was obviously in line, but at this point the trustees contemplated the advisability of once again breaking the universal custom of having clerics as presidents of colleges. Columbia had broken with this tradition in 1787 when it had appointed William Samuel Johnson its first president under the new charter. However, desirous as the trustees might now be once again to appoint a layman, it was difficult to find one who could successfully compete against the natural claim McVickar had to the office.

For the present, however, it seemed that the physical condition of Columbia's president had so far improved as to remove all cause for anxiety. As McVickar put it, "The Pres. had been very sick but under Dr. Watts' care for the past month has not only recovered but seems to be throwing off all symptoms of disease." [23] In spite of this, during McVickar's absence on vacation his opponents busied themselves in New York preparing for an election in the event of President Harris' death. This time John McVickar had no Dr. Bard to champion his candidacy, and before he knew it he had become a target in what appeared to be a political campaign.

Bishop Hobart wrote McVickar of one "very unmerritted attack (as I think I may style it) which has been made upon you." With expressions of regret that it should have caused Prof Mac "the least pain" and assurances of his "very high opinion" he ventured with episcopal caution to put in writing that McVickar was "fitted in all respects for the highest literary stations in our country. This opinion I have long entertained and expressed; I shall continue to express it, and, when opportunity offers, to sustain, and as far as may be in my power, to advance it"; but that was as far as he would go in committing his position as a senior trustee of Columbia.[24]

The fact that Bishop Hobart had come out as McVickar's champion for the presidency added fuel to the fires of the opposing camps. The professor hastened back from his vacation, though not to campaign for his election, which he took as a foregone conclusion. His mind was filled with plans for the opening of the Columbia Grammar School.

On April 22, 1829, McVickar had written, "This day they break ground for the College School behind the College." The erection of a grammar school in the rear of the old Columbia buildings with its entrance toward the north on Murray Street—this was what President Harris accounted the accomplishment of his dearest wishes. McVickar recalled that "the establishment of a college school was the first subject on which he consulted me twelve years ago when I took my seat as youngest member of that board of which the rapid rotation of life has now made me senior." [25] It was to be a two-story structure partitioned into a large hall and schoolrooms and its cost estimated at thirteen thousand dollars.[26]

McVickar's first official duty at the conclusion of the summer vacation was the dedication of the now completed Columbia Grammar School. Accordingly, the *New York American* reported that "at 10 o'clock, a procession was formed, the boys of the grammar school to the number of about one hundred, and the students of the college leading, the trustees, faculty, the parents and guardians of the scholars and such other gentlemen as attended following." [27]

The faculty, as they walked in procession with Acting President McVickar, seemed a closely knit group. James Kent, Nathanial Moore, and James Renwick, John McVickar had come to know more intimately with each weekly meeting of their Club: a mutual interest in the school had created a closer tie with his neighbor, Charles Anthon, and James Anderson had been one of his first graduates. The Italian professor Lorenzo Da Ponte, a colorful personality in whose plans to build an Italian opera house McVickar had associated himself, was also along, and Antoine Verren, who taught French. The trustees on the other hand were numerous and rather at variance, some friends and even connections of Prof Mac, all citizens of distinction. With this impressive personnel "passing up Park Place and thence through Broadway to Murray Street, the procession entered the school house."

The ceremonies included the induction of a young classics scholar who had that year graduated from Columbia, John David Ogilby. In the course of installing him as principal of the Columbia College Grammar School, McVickar reminded him of "how small are human attainments when compared with the boundless field of knowledge" and observed, as though in justification of his own career, that "to the good student as to the good man, life is but a course of never ending duties; and to run that course with an untiring ardor, with an eye which never wanders from the lofty prize, which lies beyond his reach—this is to him that very happiness which others so vainly seek in indolent repose." [28]

Two days after McVickar's address opening the Grammar School, the Reverend William Harris died. Prof Mac held the president at the last "in a dying embrace," and when it came to preaching the funeral sermon he summed up in a few words the character of his friend: "singleness of heart; meakness of tongue; piety of spirit." [29] It was noted by Philip Hone, who had just begun his famous diary, as "an eloquent and effective address by Prof McVickar." [30] The following day, at a special meeting of the trustees, John McVickar was appointed "to exercise the functions of President until a new one was appointed." [31]

As president pro tem, McVickar felt it his duty to secure the success of the Grammar School which the late president had considered of prime importance to Columbia. It had not been achieved without opposition from some of the trustees, and the day after his appointment, he hastened to assure them that although "the beginning of the school has been entered upon by many of you, it is understood, with doubt and by all with anxiety, it so far has been eminently successful."

He went on to show that it had "furnished to the college as large a body of candidates as we have ever received from any one school in its most flourishing condition," and reminded them that "it would not have been established" had it not been rendered imperative by circumstances, had not the failure or removal of a few individual teachers left us almost destitute of students and threatened to dry up the very source of our supply." [32]

Nevertheless, the opposition mounted and in the face of the coming election was making itself felt.

To Washington Irving, who had been given a minor post at the American Consulate in London to tide him over financially, Henry Brevoort Jr. wrote of the coming college election. He reported that his brother-in-law, James Renwick, with whom Irving had toured Europe in 1807, was "busy in the election." He wished Renwick "could be the man, but Judge William Duer with a wife and ten children, wants the place and his friends, I think, will have influence enough to obtain it. The only competitor at present is the senior Professor, Dr. McVickar, who, I believe, is willing to discharge both offices without any augmentation of salary for the good of the institution." [33]

John McVickar had reason to know that Columbia could not afford to pay a presidential salary and that seemed reason enough why Duer would not aspire for the honor. He had first known William Alexander Duer as a young clerk in the law office of Dr. Bard's brother-in-law, Nathaniel Pendleton. Later Duer had become one of McVickar's vestrymen at Hyde Park. Now, although he was a justice of the circuit court of the state, he had not a Columbia degree, nor a degree from any college, and was obviously neither fitted to teach nor familiar with academic problems. If he became president it might again be the sort of part-time leadership which had blocked college expansion in the past. Duer had the political "knowhow" to make himself president, while McVickar, as at the time of his election to the faculty, refused to do anything to advance his own candidacy.

The trustees who met on December 1 and heard of the "satisfactory condition of the grammar school" proceeded to vote as the salary of the president two thousand and six hundred dollars with house, but since twelve members were necessary for the choice of president, their minutes recorded, "no choice at this meeting."

Finally on December 9 Phil Hone again recorded in his diary, "W. A. Duer was elected—he received 12 votes & Prof McVickar 9—After the second ballot I voted uniformly for Dr. McVickar. I am quite satisfied with the choice which has been made but my preference for McVickar from a feeling of pride for the character of our institution of which he is a highly respectable graduate, the senior member of the faculty, and standing in such a position that it appeared to me we were putting aside his strong claims in favor of a gentleman who may be considered as a stranger to the college."[34] The trustees urged Professor McVickar to remain on the faculty, but not until the 15th of December did he receive from the president-elect a request to continue "in charge of the college" until his actual entrance on the duties of his new station. At the same time Duer expressed "assurances of unchanged sentiments" toward his defeated opponent for the presidency.

McVickar's answer was that he could fully reciprocate President Duer's sentiments and that personally he would try not to allow anything during the late contest to remain in the way of his present duty.

"My college course has ever been an open one," he wrote Duer, "and in appearing as a candidate for the presidency, I but pressed a claim which all admitted to be a natural and obvious one, and which for years had been kept before me by more than one leading member of the board of trustees. Permit me, therefore, to say that we stood in such different relations to this object as scarcely to admit that reciprocity of reasoning you apply to it."

McVickar had cause to know the ambitions of his former vestryman, and reminded Duer that with him "it was but one prize out of many to which your talents might aspire,—one external to your profession, and brought before you but at the moment of decision. To me it was the only prize which was or could be offered in life,—one for which I thought myself fitted by natural talent, for which I knew myself qualified by long experience;—one which had been kept in view during twelve years of unremitted exertion, and in some measure, I might say, earned by years of voluntary labor far beyond the requirements of my professorship, and by means of which the college was allowed to go on unembarrassed during the almost continued indisposition of the late president."

John McVickar did not hesitate to say that the decision against him had been "an ungrateful one, since my zeal was turned to my condemnation," and was much relieved by recording his "feelings on this subject." On the other hand he preferred it should be "a question remote from personal feeling," and as it was now decided he considered it was his duty not merely to submit but to avoid all discussion of the past. He was resolved to concentrate on the opportunities which lay before him and "to forget the only disappointment which life has taught me." [35]

CHAPTER 3

Teachers of Religion

Bishop Hobart . . . Religious Controversy . . .
Founding of the General Theological Seminary

THE six years of McVickar's ministry at Hyde Park had not been confined within parochial limits. He had gone about the neighborhood helping to establish local schools and had even induced his vestryman, W. A. Duer, to introduce a bill at Albany allowing religious teaching in public schools. He had set himself to studying Blackstone in order to promote laws against duelling and for more stringent liquor licensing. "The money spent for spirits needlessly drunk in this neighborhood would support its poor twice over," he declared in 1815 before the Christian Association, which he had helped to organize in Dutchess County. "It is the heaviest tax we pay, and costs the country more than all its other taxes beside. It cuts off its industry weakens its strength, . . . and paves the way for loss of liberty."

Anything toward improving the political economy of the country, from the freeing of slaves to promoting the Erie Canal, received his active support. He had also assisted in establishing churches in nearby Pine Plains and Clermont and had journeyed with Bishop Hobart in a light wagon visiting missions as far north as Lake Champlain.[1] He was among the first to press for a practical relief for the deaf and dumb. And shortly before joining the Columbia faculty he had sat in the senate chamber at Albany as one of the judges in the famous Clowes trial. The move to New York in no way lessened his active concern in church affairs.

In accepting the Columbia professorship John McVickar had stipulated that it should not interfere with possible church work on Sundays. Grace Church was then on Broadway across the street from Trinity. Since he had participated with the younger set in starting this parish, persuading his father to join the original vestry and to purchase three pews, he found a warm welcome there. Nathaniel Bowen, their first rector, had been serving in that capacity for the past eight years when in 1817 he was given a leave of absence for the winter to go south to Charleston. He asked McVickar to carry on as acting rector until his return. There was a possibility of his remaining in the south to follow the late Theodore Dehon as bishop of South Carolina. By January of the following year, however, McVickar observed that "Dr. Bowen certainly returns, the Bishopric is doubtful & the sacrifice certain & the duties arduous & the situation sickly—his congregation are much elated at it." [2]

Before coming to New York Professor McVickar had acquired a reputation as an able preacher. Samuel B. Ruggles recalled (when he was a school boy at Poughkeepsie and McVickar was rector at Hyde Park) "many a time have I slipped away and gone up there seven miles to hear him, because I was fond even then of a good sermon and good preaching." [3] For some time McVickar had been endeavoring to develop a literary style and it was probably in writing daily themes that his Saxon use of short words was mastered. They were little homilies actually read by him at his own family prayers and were later published anonymously as *Devotions for the Family and the Closet, from the Manual of a Country Clergyman.*

McVickar's devotional life was profoundly influenced by the director of his theological studies, John Henry Hobart, of whom McVickar wrote, "men who came near him grew like him." [4] In him McVickar found "a combination in which Mr. Hobart stood singular, and gives the secret, it may be said, not only of his influence over the Church but, in short, of his power through life over the minds of all who approached him, all may be traced mainly to this union in his character of traits apparently contradictory, yet equally influential. Heart and head, enthusiasm and principle, zeal and sound judgment, this was the union in man of those opposing poles of human thought, which embrace all its springs of power. Therefore it is that such men, in the sphere in which they are called to act, carry the world before them."[5]

John McVickar acknowledged toward Hobart "that greatest debt which man can owe to man—the debt of a well-disciplined mind."[6] It was soon obvious to McVickar that not only in his teaching at Columbia but in his sharing of civic responsibilities he must display a businesslike sagacity in regard to material things. He recognized as two never-failing characteristics of a businessman (which he felt Bishop Hobart possessed to perfection) that "he never committed to others what he could do himself, and never deferred himself whatever he had to do,—he had time for everything but to be idle."[7] However aptly descriptive of the bishop, this was certainly true of McVickar's own character.

In Hobart's published observations on the growing tendency in the teaching at Sunday schools from which, he declared, "have come forth spiritual pride and heretical contempt of authority, as well as Christian zeal and knowledge," McVickar found points to guide him in his present responsibility of teaching. Hobart had said it was wiser to treat the minds of students "as instruments of thought that are to be disciplined, rather than as storehouses of knowledge that are to be filled, and as a religious question, there can be still less doubt, that it is the *will* rather than the *intellect* that is to be addressed in forming Christian character."[8] Forming character, McVickar found himself advising experienced teachers of the Columbia faculty, was the chief responsibility of the college. To inspire the undergraduates with a desire to learn and to open to them the paths to further knowledge was more important than cramming their heads full of facts which would be forgotten soon after the examinations by which their fitness for a degree was judged. The only hope for education was that these pupils discover for themselves far more than their present teachers were able to impart to them.

* * *

As a controversialist McVickar's power lay in his ability to perceive and study the whole of any question. Once convinced, his arguments were stated in logical order and with a compelling firmness. Since the roots of misunderstanding lay in ignorance, the cure was to be found in study and teaching. To this end McVickar believed the church should serve as an instrument and for him it was the Episcopal Church with its Catholic principles.

Before long John McVickar began to feel himself part of the responsible population of New York City. There was a pleasant comradeship among the clergy of all denominations, and with civic government as loosely put together as it was, these ministers of the Gospel were depended upon not only for the advocacy of religion and culture but also for the maintenance of law and order. Out of some eight thousand graduates from the twelve oldest colleges, about a thousand ministers were now scattered throughout the states. They represented for the most part old world denominations, some of which retained their prewar relation to the parent churches and others, such as McVickar's own church, which had secured complete autonomy while remaining in communion with the parent body.

In the past, Roman Catholicism had been banned from New Amsterdam by the Dutch. To be sure, there was the British Governor Dongan (later connected with the McVickars by marriage) who had come to New York with a Jesuit as his personal chaplain. But then there arose a conflict with the Jesuits of French Canada in a bid for the loyalty of the Iroquois Indians, and an increasing fear of invasion through the waterways from the north. The result, after Dongan's departure, was that the New York legislature of 1700 passed a law prohibiting "Jesuits and Papish Priests from exercising their office in the province on pain of perpetual imprisonment." This law had been repealed after the Revolution, however, and a year before John McVickar was born the Roman Catholics erected their first church in the city, a brick building known as St. Peter's, facing the Columbia green. In the State of New York, where there were then more than two hundred Protestant churches, this was the sole Roman Catholic parish. Twenty-eight years later a more imposing structure in Prince Street was consecrated by the bishop of Boston as a procathedral, and now the two parishes were merged into one St. Patrick's corporation. The Hebrews also, as far as McVickar knew, were represented by one synagogue only.

As for the Protestants, the Lutherans, who had also been banned by the Dutch, were now beginning to organize, and there were a few Quaker congregations mostly in rural districts, while the Baptists had a couple of chapel buildings in the city and the Methodists five by 1817. It was the Presbyterians with their closely related brothers, the Dutch Reformed, whose churches throughout the state far outnumbered all other congregations.

The Anglican Church seemed at its lowest ebb. For a century and a half in the American colonies it had remained nominally part of the London diocese administered by a bishop in England who never crossed the ocean. This voided the possibility of confirmation or ordination in America. John McVickar was one of the first to be christened under an American bishop consecrated for New York in February 1787 by the archbishops of Canterbury and York.[9] The baptism had to take place in St. Paul's Chapel Broadway because Trinity had been left a charred ruin at the head of Wall Street since the great fire of 1776. Even now in 1817 Trinity was housed in a temporary wood structure already showing signs of disintegration.

McVickar and his father had been struck with the neglected condition of the mother church on their visit to England in 1805. There it was reported that out of about 10,800 beneficies, 6,311 were without resident incumbents.[10] In 1804, seemingly to relieve this situation, the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in London, its sole object to "encourage the wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment."

When five years later the impact of this movement reached New York, Hobart took the lead in insisting that the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* be distributed together with the Bible.[11] To this end in February 1809 a New York Bible and Prayer Book Society was started.[12] This met with opposition from many Episcopalians as well as from members of nonepiscopal churches who eight months later, following the example of a group in Philadelphia, succeeded in establishing a New York Bible Society with the original purpose of dispensing Bibles only.

In May 1816 the Columbia provost, John Mitchell Mason, went further and announced the formation of an American Bible Society with Elias Boudinot as president. This had the backing of delegates from thirty-one states representing nondenominational societies organized for the distribution of the Scriptures "without note or comment." It included among its founders McVickar's brother-in-law, William Jay, and other Episcopalians.

In this connection, John McVickar, when rector of St. James's, Hyde Park, had been one of Hobart's earliest supporters.[13] Especially the ideal of employing the Bible as a means of religious education and discipline appealed to McVickar as an essential Catholic principle. With practically no theological seminaries and only a scattering of Sunday schools to interpret the Bible, it seemed to him fruitless to distribute it alone. The prayer book at least took the scripture writings and applied them to everyday living and dying. An address with which Professor McVickar made his first public appearance in New York in January 1818, before the Auxiliary New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society in St. Paul's Chapel, evinced such mature judgment that it was published.[14]

"As to the general question," McVickar later recorded, "Bishop Hobart was right, he feared not controversy in the path of duty, nor should any man. If a man love peace more than principle, him hath not yet the *truth made free*. Nor do the evils of religious controversy always, as some think, over-balance the benefit." McVickar was ready to say, "The teacher who fails 'to contend' on all suitable occasions 'for the faith once delivered to the saints,' is answerable for the error that grows up by his neglect." [15]

* * *

Convinced that secular and religious education were inseparable in any attempt to present the whole truth, McVickar took a leading part in developing the General Theological Seminary in New York City and finally in founding St. Stephen's (Bard) College at Annandale-on-Hudson. Nevertheless, as in his plans for other graduate schools, he was consistent in his idea of having theology closely associated with, if not part of, the general university system.

In 1805 when McVickar was studying at Oxford, John Mitchell Mason had also been in England, soliciting funds and books for a theological seminary in New York. Although he was a minister of the Associated Reformed Church of Scotland, his theological school proposed to accommodate its teaching to all Protestant denominations. John Henry Hobart, then an assistant minister at Trinity Church, felt it impossible for Episcopalians to be included in this plan of a union seminary and was already thinking of a separate school along general Catholic lines. The rivalry of these two dynamic leaders was strangely parallel. Mason's *Letters on Frequent Communion,* published some years before, had proved acceptable to his church and he had founded the *Christian Magazine* to carry forward his ideas. And now, after serving five years as provost of Columbia, Mason had just put out *A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic Principles.*

To set forth the Catholic claims of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Hobart published in 1808 the *Churchman's Magazine,* for which nine years later he substituted *The Christian Journal and Literary Register.*[16] Further, he planned and organized a clerical association under the title of The Protestant Episcopal Theological Society with a view, as stated in its constitution, "to the advancement of its youthful members in theological knowledge, etc." This plan took effect in 1806 and, however feeble in its means, McVickar later declared, "is yet to be considered as the germ of the noblest existing institution of our Church—its General Theological Seminary." [17]

McVickar, on his return from studying at Oxford, was among the first to receive the educational guidance of this society and through it was duly impressed with the value of the Christian ministry and in particular "the excellence of that apostolic and primitive church." By May 1811 Hobart had submitted a plan for a "Grammar School and Theological Seminary" to be supervised by the bishops of New York and New Jersey under the patronage of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. For this he purchased ten acres in the vicinity of the village of Springfield, New Jersey. But not until May 1817 did the Convention accede by voting for a theological seminary to be located in New York but serving the entire church.

For two years the General Convention endeavored to start their theological seminary but advanced no further than designating two professors. Then, through Bishop Hobart, Clement Moore offered sixty lots of his inherited lands in Greenwich Village, including what later became Chelsea Square, on condition that "the building of the theological school be erected thereon." [18] Moore had published *A Compendius Lexicon of the Hebrew Language* in two volumes and was genuinely interested in theological education. Plans for the seminary building were frustrated, however, owing to a lack of funds. The General Convention, therefore, decided to relocate the proposed institution in New Haven, Connecticut.

In this dilemma McVickar advanced a "Plan of theological professorships to be attached to Columbia and other colleges." Prof Mac's proposition as it related to the Episcopalians was as follows: "The endowment for the support of the professor to be created by donations from individuals attached to the Protestant Episcopal Church until it reaches a revenue of $2,500 per annum." The appointment of the professor was to rest with the bishop subject to the approbation of the college board of trustees.

McVickar then went on to advocate that theological instruction be given at two levels. First "a sub-graduate course of lectures on the evidence of revealed religion, to be delivered weekly to such of the classes as the trustees may see fit to appoint." The president of the college was to be the official visitor in these lower grades. They were to be preparatory for higher grades in theology over which the bishop and standing committee of the diocese were to have jurisdiction. These were to constitute "a course of theological instruction confined to the students of divinity in accordance with that prescribed by the canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church." [19] The plan, which could be applied to other churches as well, was in keeping with the charter of Columbia College and seemed to appeal to the regents of the state university and others, but Bishop Hobart feared it might "involve the church too much," presumably in the matter of sharing authority.

At the Diocesean Convention in October 1820 the bishop's address stressed the obvious advantage in an Episcopal theological school being placed, if not in intimate union with an Episcopal college, at least near enough to admit students to the facilities such a college would offer. It pointed out that "the Baptists have a theological institution at Washington," the Associate Reformed had theirs, the Dutch Reformed Church were contemplating moving theirs to the city, and the Presbyterians had a theological school in Princeton.[20]

This resulted in the Convention delegating to the Protestant Episcopal Theological Education Society, which Hobart had organized in 1806, the responsibility for the education of Episcopal clergy in the State of New York. Dr. Bard agreed to serve as vice president for Dutchess County, Rufus King for Queens, Peter Jay for New York (of which he was the city recorder), and William Alexander Duer for Albany. The constitution of this society provided for establishing professorships and aiding candidates for holy orders. It continued through the years as the Society for Promoting Religion and Learning, and in due time paid tribute to Professor McVickar when he had served "for more than a quarter of a century as Superintendent and chairman of its Education Committee, conducting its correspondence and managing its transactions with the numerous applicants and scholars." [21]

Through this society Hobart started his theological seminary in New York City after the General Convention moved its institution to New Haven. The faculty for the New York seminary included, with Bishop Hobart, Benjamin Onderdonk, Guilian Crommelin Verplanck, and Clement Moore, whom Prof Mac found contented and "much better, having regular employment in his new Professorship [of biblical learning and interpretation of scripture]."

The work of the society had been progressing slowly, however, when a benefaction from the estate of Jacob Sherred, earmarked for a seminary in New York State, strengthened its financial prospects. There had been for some years a divinity school and medical faculty in connection with the Fairfield Academy east of Utica. Bishop Hobart now resolved to remove this divinity school to a site at the north end of Lake Seneca. To this end he reported to the Diocesean Convention that he had gone upstate "to make arrangements with respect to the Branch Theological School." [22] Thus Hobart established the college which was in time to bear his name. And then in February 1822, the General Convention resolved to bring back from New Haven its theological college and unite it with the seminary in New York City under the title of the "General Theological Seminary."

CHAPTER 4

Collegiate Extension

Adult Education and The Club . . . Proposal
of a New University for New York

HAD McVickar confined himself to his classroom his influence might have been limited, but he allied himself with the cultural interests of New York and gradually gathered together a group of imaginative and open-minded men whose combined impact became significant in the affairs of the new nation. This in turn had its effect on McVickar's outlook, widening his interests and deepening his knowledge of humanity. After many conferences a plan for extending the teaching of the college to the adult population of the city was evolved by McVickar with his literary and scientific friends.

When McVickar had first undertaken his responsibilities at Columbia College in 1817, he had been voted into the Literary and Philosophical Society, which had just been started as New York's rival to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. He was elected its Counselor on four successive occasions and drew into its activities Mayhew Wainwright, James Renwick, and others.

Because of this association John McVickar found himself the center of a small group of kindred spirits who met together informally to discuss ways of raising the cultural standards of the city. As far back as 1810 John Howard Payne, who had been publishing anonymously an eight-page critical review of the New York theatre, was engaged to open a "Literary Exchange" in front of the City Hotel. The hope was that it might in time equal an institution Boston had three years before modeled after the

Liverpool Athenaeum. Nothing had come of it, and Payne had gone abroad where he was now collaborating in playwriting with Washington Irving. His *Clari or The Maid of Milan* had just been made into an opera, at the request of Charles Kemble, in which the song *Home Sweet Home* was catching the popular ear.

Only in June of 1824 were McVickar and his group of friends able to bring into being an Athenaeum for New York. It was heralded by a twelve-page pamphlet signed by fifty-nine merchants and doctors and literary men, including the Columbia president, William Harris, and other representatives of the college. The object was to furnish opportunity for the highest culture and to advance science, art, and literature. To this end they proposed a library to comprise standard elementary works of science and literature of every age and nation, and to arrange for a monthly lecture "open to ladies and gentlemen."

These McVickar hoped would constitute a series of extension lectures carrying the intellectual standards of Columbia to the general public. For this reason he proposed that the Athenaeum should have the "use of the College rooms," and set himself to planning its organization.[1] To promote these plans he accepted the office of president. For some time the weekly gatherings of his colleagues (who began to be spoken of as the "Club") discussed topics and possible lecture courses. It was finally decided that Charles Anthon should open the courses with a lecture on Roman literature. Professor Anthon had proved himself an able young scholar of Greek and Latin at Columbia, where he still lived as Prof Mac's next-door neighbor. McVickar's friend, Charles King, whose father was serving a second time as minister to Great Britain, was selected to hold forth next on the popular subject of phrenology. He had been a trustee of Columbia, and it was hoped that his position as editor of *The New York American* would aid in giving publicity to the lectures.

This lecture was to be followed by an address on a subject which had been urged upon Prof Mac by his father-in-law before he died. In 1817 Dr. Bard had written from Hyde Park, "I have no doubt but you will, when ever you think it proper and are permitted to, make your course in part at least publick—your belles lettres course I think shd be that you begin with, because that will be the most popular.—I will not venture to mention my plan for your belles lettres course but as a part that I believe you will execute particularly well, I would advise you to add some lectures upon *Taste* for the fine arts as it is connected with elegance of manners, with virtues, sentiments & feelings." [2]

Dr. Bard went so far as to outline such a lecture, and now five years after Sam Bard's death, Prof Mac was fulfilling the pledge he had written his wife at Hyde Park after first receiving the doctor's manuscript, "Your Father's lecture on Taste I will promise to deliver." Thus the third public lecture of the Athenaeum was to be given by Professor John McVickar on the topic "Taste and Beauty."

Richard Ray was down for the following lecture. He was to speak on "The Revival of Classical Literature." James Renwick, next on the list, had just received a medal from the Franklin Institute for an invention in connection with operating the Morris Canal between the Delaware and Hudson rivers. During the six years he had been teaching as professor of natural and experimental philosophy and chemistry, his charm of personality had been widely recognized. His ability as the author of the first extensive treatise in America on natural philosophy also fitted him to give the public discourse on chemistry.

"Painting," the topic of the seventh lecture, fell naturally to Samuel Morse. This lecture was, as Morse called it, "my turn at the Athenaeum" and he felt that "these lectures—if well done, place me alone among the artists; I being the only one who has as yet written a course of lectures in our country." [3]

Then came William Cullen Bryant, now a man of thirty-two, who had arrived in New York the previous year, under the sponsorship of Prof Mac's colleague Guilian Verplanck, to start his journalistic career. His "Ode to a Waterfowl" and other poems had brought him to public attention, and it was agreed by the other members of the Club that there was no one better fitted to speak on poetry. John Hone was scheduled for a lecture on commerce, and the closing lectures for the Athenaeum's first year were to be delivered by two divines, John Frederick Schroeder, an assistant priest at Trinity Church who was equipped to speak on Oriental literature and the Presbyterian James McFarlane Mathews.

Thus it was an Athenaeum took form and gained general acceptance. And in the spring of 1827 its secretary, Henry Brevoort, was instructed to inform Professor McVickar that the New York Athenaeum had made him "a member for life, as testimony of their high sense of the service he had rendered to the institution." [4]

Not the least of the cultural enterprises started at this time by members of the Club was a series of commentaries on American law. James Kent was persuaded to devote himself to this compendium of legal knowledge because of a new interest in legal education as evidenced by Nathan Dane's endowment of a law professorship at Harvard. Chancellor Kent, often referred to as a most companionable man, was a close friend of McVickar but he had not always had regard for the clergy. "I remember that in my younger days," he was quoted by one of the members of the Club as saying, "there were few professional men that were not infidels, or at least so far inclined to infidelity that they could not be called believers in the truth of the Bible. What has led to the change?" he asked by way of discussion, and then gave his own observation that "one great reason of it is with the ministers of the Gospel themselves. As a profession they are better qualified for their work than formerly.

"Notwithstanding the venerable names of Edwards and Davies, and some others," he went on, "who are to be had in reverence for their learning and ability; take the clergy as a class, and they were not, forty or fifty years ago what they are now." He then pointed out how much effort was being made to educate ministers for their work and to raise them more to a level with educated minds in other professions.

In conclusion, he declared that "if thinking men are to embrace Christianity, our understandings, as well as our conscience must be addressed. We must have argument as well as exhortation." [5]

With him in the Club was William Johnson, who had reported for the court of chancery throughout Chancellor Kent's brilliant career. Up to this time United States jurisprudence had been based on that of England, although it was often not applicable. William Johnson had therefore set himself to record American cases not only of his time but also earlier decisions on which facts were obtainable. It was these that Kent was now publishing in a first volume of his *Commentaries*.

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Joseph Story, who was in a few years to begin publishing his own *Commentaries,* said of Johnson, "He loves the law with all his heart. His reports are distinguished by the most scrupulous accuracy, good sense and good taste—no lawyer can ever express a better wish for his country's jurisprudence than it may possess such a Chancellor and such a reporter." [6]

Another representative of the legal profession among the original members of the Club was Peter Augustus Jay, whose younger brother William had married Prof Mac's sister Augusta. A man of wide interests, he was at fifty a trustee both of Columbia and the College of Physicians and Surgeons; had from the start favored the Erie Canal; and actively supported his brother, now a leader in agitating for the repeal of slavery in the District of Columbia. Philip Hone described him as "always wise, always honest, but sometimes a little prejudiced."

The little club of men who formed Prof Mac's circle was not a clique in any personal or political sense, but rather a group of congenial souls bound together by high civic aspirations. By now it had resolved itself into a more definite organization in which the members submitted themselves to an almost Pickwickian set of "RULES AND REGULATIONS of the association called the CLUB." The manuscript record preserved among John McVickar's papers provided that "the club shall consist of 12 members, no more," meeting every Thursday night in the houses of its several members in rotation. There was to be "no set supper" and on the sideboard there was allowed only "one dish of cold meat, some bread, butter, biscuit, cheese & fruit. The drink may be lemonade, claret & water, beer & cider." Members could introduce "one stranger at every meeting & persons who entertain may invite several strangers but not more than two residents." The members' names appended were: "Mr. Jay, Mr.

Johnson, Judge Kent, Profr MacVickar, Dr. Mathews, Profr Moore, Mr. Morse, Profr Renwick, Dr. J. A. Smith, Dr. Wainright." To these were soon added Henry Brevoort Jr. and Jonathan Goodhue (son of the senator for Massachusetts), who had become a successful merchant in New York.[7]

John Quincy Adams, in the course of his journeys back and forth to Washington, was always invited to the Club. In the summer of 1826 they had expected him, but Professor McVickar wrote his mother, "the Presdt has just passed thro on his way to Boston where he had hoped to find his father living." John Adams died exactly fifty years after the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* and his political opponent Thomas Jefferson died on the same day in July. "We intermitted to toil of Examination yesterday," Prof Mac recorded, "but for a harder toil, that of marching in procession under a burning sun for near two miles thro the city in celebration of the funeral obsequies of Adams and Jefferson."

McVickar's high sense of humor prompted him to tell his mother that in the midst of political sorrow they "thought for a time they had lost another of our great men—Phil Hone—the report was circulated thro both markets at an early hour in the morning & from thence thro the city." This rumored death of New York's mayor, "upon being traced," Prof Mac went on to say, the mayor's wife, "Mrs. Hone, told me it arose from the death of a celebrated mare on Long Island." The report from the racing stable "was overheard and misunderstood." [8]

Occasionally the Club meetings were enlivened by foreign visitors, such as the archaeologist who brought the Rosetta Stone to England, Sir Hilgrove Turner. After returning from New York to Bermuda (where he was governor), Turner wrote asking McVickar to "tell the gentlemen of the Club (I wish I knew their names) if fate brings me once more to N. York, that I hope to be again indebted to them for the first of all delights, rational & agreeable conversation." [9]

Serious as were their weekly discussions, the group was naturally drawn together on occasions for far less serious purposes. When Fenimore Cooper's luncheon group gave him a testimonial dinner in May 1826, one of the Club members, Chancellor Kent, was in the chair, another, Peter Jay, chairman of the committee on arrangements, and a third, James Renwick, proposed the toast: "Irony and raillery, the pastime of the lunch, may they be the serious pursuits of the nation." This was the year *The Last of the Mohicans* appeared, a high year for James Fenimore Cooper, and he was taking his wife, Susan Delancy, and their children to enjoy the fruits of his popularity abroad where his easily translatable novels had made him many admirers in Europe.

The Club was constantly a source of help to its members, as when McVickar, because of his interest in art, was appointed by the Philosophical Society to a committee to consider certain "communications from the National Academy of the Arts of Design" for which his friend Morse was responsible. To clear matters further it was arranged by the Columbia members of the Club to have Samuel Morse give a "Discourse on Academies in Art" in the college chapel.[10]

McVickar and several others of the Club had planned a course of lectures to be given under the auspices of the Athenaeum by a former member of the Dartmouth faculty who had recently become professor of chemistry at the College of Physicians and Surgeons. James Freeman Dana fascinated his audiences with an exposition of the discovery in England of what he called "the electro magnet." At the Club these Athenaeum lectures were eagerly discussed. James Renwick was their exponent in this particular field, and Sam Morse recalled later addressing him "on the subject of the velocity of electricity in such a way as to indicate to him that I was contriving an electric telegraph."

Morse often contributed to the Club discussions literary gossip from his correspondence with Cooper when he was finally settled in London. Their friend Washington Irving, whose new *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* had secured him academic recognition from Oxford University, also kept in touch. In writing Irving in Madrid of the history's "complete success" at home, Henry Brevoort assured him that "the opinions of Chancellor Kent, P. A. Jay, W. Johnson, Prof. Moore," all members with him of the Club in New York, "place it in the first rank of historical compositions." Further, he wrote his friend, "Renwick is busily employed in writing an introductory discourse to the Athenaeum lectures."[11]

A description of the group of intellectuals who were members of the Club and continued to meet after the formation of the New York Athenaeum was given in a letter to Albert Gallatin from Dr. John Augustine Smith, formerly a professor of anatomy, surgery, and physiology on the faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Smith had gone back to his own college of William and Mary in Virginia to serve as its president. For twelve years he had labored to move that college to Richmond and there to create medical and theological departments. When this proposal was blocked by Thomas Jefferson's scheme for a state university at Charlottesville, Smith resigned. Now for the past two or three years he had been abroad or practicing in New York, where he was drawn into the intimate circle of Prof Mac's Club.

"Nearly two years ago," as Dr. Smith recalled it, "some of the literary gentlemen of the city, feeling severely the almost total want of intercourse among themselves, determined to establish an association which could bring them more frequently into contact. Accordingly they formed the 'Club,' as it is commonly called."

He went on to note the membership at this time saying that "into this Club 12 persons only are admitted, & there are at present three gentlemen of the bar, Chancellor Kent, Messrs Johnson & Jay, three professors of Columbia College, Messrs McVickar, Moore and Renwick, the Rev. Drs. Wainwright & Mathews the former of the Episcopal, the latter of the Presbyterian church, two merchants, Messrs Brevoort & Goodhue, & I have the honor to represent the medical faculty. Our 12th associate was Mr. Morse of the National Academy of Design, of which he was president, and his departure for Europe has caused a vacancy."

Sam Morse was to spend three years abroad studying art, and Henry Brevoort had written introducing Morse to Washington Irving, "He is, as you probably know, one of our best painters & has essentially contributed to advance the state of the arts among us." To this he added, "He has moreover claims upon my kindness, from his being a fellow member of a little club of intelligent individuals who are in the habit of meeting at each others houses for social & conversational purposes."

To fill the vacancy occasioned by Morse's departure, it had been agreed by Prof Mac and the other members of the Club that since Albert Gallatin was retiring from politics and planning to reside in New York he should become the Club's "new member." Augustine Smith had been delegated to inform the former Secretary of Treasury of his election.

As for the "regulations," Dr. Smith continued in his letter to Gallatin, "The best comment upon them is that from the very commencement we have gone on with the most perfect harmony & to our mutual & great pleasure. In truth it may be safely avowd that for agreeableness of conversation there is nothing in New York at all comparable to our Institution. We meet once a week —have no officers—no formalities—invite when we can see them intelligent & distinguished strangers, & after a plain & light repast retire about eleven o'clock. Such is the outline of our 'club'." [12]

To the delight of John McVickar, Gallatin became one of the twelve members of the Club, where the reserve and reticence which gave him a reputation of being unsympathetic was soon dissolved. He was a little taller than the average and at the age of sixty-seven his thinning hair exposed strongly marked features of intellect and character. McVickar found his Calvinistic austerity an addition to the discussion group, and his continued interest in Indians, as well as banking, a common bond.[13] Dr. Smith felt that "Mr. Gallatin brought in a more varied conversation" and declared in this that "he had no rival on this side of the Atlantic and Talleyrand alone on the other."

* * *

The sudden blocking of McVickar's enterprising spirit by the Columbia trustees might well have carried him, as it did other members of his Club, into agitating for a new university. But McVickar considered that a city in which one college could barely survive could not be expected to support two. Furthermore, his loyalty to Columbia and his patient idealism made him continue to work for the improvement of what already existed.

Some of his friends in the Club, however, did not have the same reservations. The defeat of John McVickar for the presidency indicated to them that the Columbia trustees intended to block the program already under way for the extension of higher education. Certainly the newly elected "stranger to the college" was not likely to favor plans for developing Columbia into the great New York university which had been discussed at the Club meetings.

Among the books earnestly discussed in the Club, Dwight's *Travels in the North of Germany* had created a new interest in the system of advanced education. German methods were being generally favored, as a *New York American* editorial during the Columbia election had warned those who opposed the college's expansion, saying, "Berlin and Göttingen will stir up the movement for a University of New York."

The suggestion had arisen in the Club that in case of McVickar's defeat he might be backed in starting a new university that would carry forward his ideas. The hope was that departments of theology and medicine, such as Smith had failed to create when he was president of William and Mary College, could be effected now in New York. In that event the new College of Pharmacy together with that of the Physicians and Surgeons might be incorporated in the new university.

However Professor McVickar might feel it his duty now to submit and forget his speculations for Columbia's future, his friends were in no mood to be halted. The day after President-elect Duer's letter to McVickar asking him to carry on at Columbia, nine men gathered and resolved to fight for "the establishment of a university in the city of New York on a liberal and extensive scale." [14] Among them were James Mathews and Mayhew Wainwright, two Club members who represented opposite sides of any religious difference in those days. Another two were physicians set on reviving a university medical faculty such as Samuel Bard had once created for Columbia. They were Augustine

Smith and Valentine Mott, a member of the Rutgers group which had been turned down by Columbia. A friend of Prof Mac's from undergraduate days, subsequently related by marriage, John Delafield, also joined these men in supporting the demand for a New York university.[15]

Other members of the Club felt for the most part with McVickar that they were too closely connected with Columbia to permit their active participation in the independent movement. Within a few days, however, the Athenaeum, the Historical Society, and the Lyceum of Natural History had each appointed three delegates to discuss the advisability of erecting a new university. The following week, when they assembled to discuss the proposed university, "the meeting hitherto informal was organized" with James Mathews as chairman and John Delafield acting as secretary. The die was cast. It remained to be seen whether Columbia College could survive the competition.

The year 1830 may be said to have marked the beginning of a new era—chemistry was being applied to industrial arts, electricity was about to become a utility, and steam was opening a new source of mechanical power. In discussions at the Club McVickar had been among the first to advocate Columbia becoming a university which would serve as a medium for the new thought to break through barriers of ignorance and indifference. He had no desire to discourage men like Wainwright and Mathews in their effort to found a new institution, if necessary, to carry out this ideal, but he contended that it would fail unless it combined the existing cultural societies in the city, including Columbia College itself.

To throw the matter open for discussion the New York Historical Society offered its rooms for a meeting, and General Morgan Lewis was pressed into serving as chairman. The seventy-six-year-old general, a one-time warden with Dr. Bard of John McVickar's church at Hyde Park, had escorted George Washington at the first inauguration. His presence lent weight to the meeting. The rector of Grace Church, Mayhew Wainwright, was ready with a dissertation, which he had previously talked over with McVickar, on the "expediency and means of establishing a university in the city of New York." He outlined clearly the intention of including such institutions as the Lyceum, Historical Society, Athenaeum and Academies of Arts and Design and went so far as to propose to Columbia "an amalgamation and a Standing Committee with Morgan Lewis as Chairman."[16] A committee was appointed to convey this proposal to the Columbia trustees and also to secure, if possible, the former almshouse behind the City Hall for the use of the proposed university.

Meeting a fortnight later, the Columbia trustees noted in this proposal an implication that because their president was, according to the grant from Trinity, to be of one religious "denomination," therefore the function of the college was limited. They sought to remove this impression by requiring the president to give instruction on the evidences of the Christian religion in general, "but not on the nature or evidence of its doctrines as professed by any particular denomination of christians."[17] This was accompanied by an announcement that Columbia would sponsor a new "scientific and literary course" so that the professors might give "public lectures."

At this point, the trustees were bending backward to hold on to the professor whose past services had been so disregarded, for if McVickar and his friends should be deflected into the new university movement it might conceivably turn the balance against them. Accordingly, at their next meeting (February 2, 1830) they recorded their "high and grateful sense of the valuable services of Professor McVickar in discharging, in addition to the duties of the department which he so ably fills, those of the office of president during the frequent indispositions of the late venerated incumbent, and especially since his decease." As an evidence of their high regard the treasurer was instructed "to spend $250" for books to be presented to John McVickar.[18]

The result was the committee of the proposed New York university could merely report back "that the amalgamation with Col Coll was unfavorable," and further that their "attempt to secure the alms house was in vain." Columbia, on the other hand, made a show of starting the proposed course of public lectures with the hope that it would satisfy the demand for expansion. Further, Mc-

Vickar was to give the introductory lecture on his favorite subject of political economy, which, the *New York American* announced, was "in pursuance of the late statute of the trustees of Columbia College." The newspaper reminded the public that "on several occasions of deep interest to the business and pursuits of the great mass of our citizens," Professor McVickar had "made his voice heard in plain and forcible language." The editor of the *American,* Charles King, was speaking for his fellow trustees when he warned that this was "a course which will, we presume, test pretty decisively the extent of that desire and thirst for instruction in useful knowledge which is supposed to exist in this city." [19]

McVickar put enough into this lecture to warrant its subsequent publication in London with an explanation that it related to "the scheme of a university then current in New York, grounded upon the alleged inadequacy" of Columbia College. It carried the statement that although "the popular cry was for a new institution, the friends of the college argued for enlargement as both more safe and more economical." [20]

In the columns of the *New York American,* the citizens read that notwithstanding the weather the lecture in the hall of Columbia College was numerously attended. The editor remarked on McVickar's voice and manner as particularly pleasing, which made him admirably qualified for a public lecturer, and went on to say, "we are quite sure that his sound and practical views upon banks, upon general education, and upon the importance of free trade must have given universal satisfaction. We trust that his lectures," the article concluded, "will be properly patronized, believing, as we do, that they will prove highly beneficial to all classes of society." [21]

John McVickar's crusade for the "enlargement" of Columbia College was only halfheartedly supported by trustees who had opposed his administration in the recent election, and lectures of others in this extension course were even less successful. One of the Columbia trustees, who was also a member of the Board of Aldermen, stated that from the number and character of the persons who attended the very able course on the steam engine which Professor James Renwick was then delivering as part of this series, he could not believe there existed that demand among the community at large for the higher branches of education which had been asserted to exist by the friends of the university.[22] Yet Renwick's *Treatise on the Steam Engine,* growing out of these lectures, was translated and widely read in Europe later.

It became obvious that sufficient interest in these lectures was not forthcoming, and finally President Duer made it known that only one solitary application had been made to attend the new courses. But by this time the Common Council of New York City had taken the matter in hand and appointed a Joint Committee on Public Offices and Arts and Sciences to consider the subject of a "new university."

The proceedings had opened on January 27, 1830, with James John Roosevelt, law partner of Peter Jay, in the chair. The memorial of Morgan Lewis and others applying to the Common Council for the use of the old almshouse to be converted into a university was then read. At this and at succeeding meetings many distinguished citizens were heard from. Mayhew Wainwright complained that the college of which he had been trustee for the past six years "had not advanced one iota in the last 30 years." Dr. Smith inveighed against the college as a "close corporation." Then probably drawing on his own experience as president of William and Mary, he depicted in animated language the disadvantages under which all such institutions labored, "always behind the march of intellect & the progress of civilization."

Morgan Lewis, who had resigned his Columbia trusteeship when he became governor of New York, pointed to the fact that although the college had been long in existence, longer he believed than he himself (King's College was chartered the year he was born), yet it had not in the whole period advanced, but on the contrary "gone backward." He referred to certain subjects (which McVickar had fought to establish as graduate schools), those of theology and anatomy for example, which he, the governor, had taken there when a young man, that had been abandoned.

Alluding to Columbia's "new plan of instruction," James Milnor, rector of St. George's Church, asked how it was supposed that the professors would perform these additional duties when he knew personally that they had always complained of having too much to do before. James McFarlane Mathews, the Presbyterian minister, said that the university plan had been "frankly communicated" to the Columbia trustees by him as intending to cover ground which Columbia College "could not cover and never had covered." It was at that meeting, according to him, that a committee was appointed by the college to "derive a more enlarged system of instruction" than the one in operation. In reference to the possible effect of the proposed university on Columbia College, Mayhew Wainwright observed that a scholar from Oxford "who came out in the last arrivals," spoke of Oxford and also Cambridge as having received a new impulse and new accessions of students entirely through the reaction produced upon them by the London university. The visitor also reported that the London university was "in a most prosperous condition."

The progress of London's new university had been closely watched by Professor McVickar since the letter received from his brother Ben in England had noted its proposal. He had shown Wainwright and the other members of the Club a subsequent letter he had received from Dr. Benjamin McVickar advising, "The London University has been taken up by very wealthy and influential men here," and adding he felt it would succeed if only considered as a "stock speculation." It was two years ago that Ben had heard that "they intend to call their Professors in the Classics from Oxford & those in Mathematics from Cambridge & what with the prospect of Fame in being the first in so great an institution & of fortune as they are to receive a proportion of their Remuneration from their classes which will no doubt be numerous, it is reasonable to conclude that the Trustees will be able to command men of the first talents & learning. With respect to obtaining any plans of lectures which you mention," his brother had promised Prof Mac that he would make inquiry. Not four months later, in October 1828, McVickar was informed that the university in London had opened, announcing as its purpose "to provide useful instruction, at a reasonable rate, primarily for young men of the middle classes." [23]

These meetings of the Joint Committee of the Common Council went on with their hearings from one side and the other until Bishop Hobart (now in the fifty-fifth and last year of his life) revealed where Columbia's trouble really lay—"the expenses of the College exceeded the income by $2,000." [24] He pointed out that the accommodations of the college, however, would admit of double or three times the number of pupils they had now. To McVickar it was a satisfaction to hear the bishop had expressed his belief that the number of students would probably be much increased by the recent establishment of the grammar school attached to the college.

Apart from his loyalty to Columbia and his doubts as to whether the city could support two universities, McVickar appears to have had an even more basic objection to the proposed university. The plans submitted by its proponents called for a purely secular institution, and this ran contrary to McVickar's lifelong conviction that religion and education were inseparable. He formulated this objection on his return from abroad some years later when he criticized the French system of education on the grounds that "France had formed her university expressly on the model of that of the State of New York" which he defined as "the principle of Education without the Gospel." To McVickar this principle constituted an absolute misconception of the nature and aims of education.[25]

CHAPTER 5

Pioneering in Political Economy

First American Text in Political Economy . . . Letter from Thomas Jefferson . . . In Washington with Webster, Jackson, and John Marshall

JOHN McVICKAR had the humility of mind essential in a good scholar. Before attempting to write a book on political economy he made due inquiry of Harvard, Princeton, Union, and other centers of learning in America as to whether there were a satisfactory publication on the subject. When he found there was none, he turned to a young economist in Scotland who had written an article for an encyclopedia. Although he agreed with it only in part, he reprinted it for the edification of the American public and added his own observations on political economy as applied to American conditions. This was the first work in political economy to be published in America.

It was probably McVickar's satisfaction with the publication of his first biography that gave him the incentive to publish a book on economics. Certainly he needed a textbook for teaching. In preparation he sounded out various colleges to discover how they were considering "political economy" as a subject for academic instruction.

From Edward Everett, who had recently spent five years in Europe equipping himself for the post of professor of Greek literature at Harvard, McVickar received the information "that the dpt of Political Economy in our University, is at present [January 8, 1822] in an ill-arranged state, in consequence of wch I am unable to state to you the full course of instruction in it. Mr. Frisbie, our late able professor in that branch," Everett wrote, referring to Harvard's professor of natural religion, moral philosophy, and civil polity, "died a few months since: & his department is now merely in commission. He used Say's treatise on Political Economy, but accompanied it throughout with a Commentary viva voce of his own." Professor McVickar was familiar with the recently published translation of Jean Baptiste Say's *Traite d'economie politique* but did not find it suitable for his Columbia classes.

Edward Everett assured him that "no text-book is in preparation in this quarter, so far as I know; nor is one likely to be attempted. A judicious work for the use of our Colleges in this branch, is certainly much wanted. I have never seen the work of Mill's you mention," he observed. Then, indicating the recent *Nouveaux Principes d'economie politique* which had appeared as a humanitarian protest against economic science having dealt too much on the means of increasing wealth and too little on its use for producing happiness, Everett added that he had "lately read with a good deal of pleasure a work in 2 vols. 8 vo. by Sismondi on Political Economy. It is an amplification of the article on this subject written by Sismondi for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia."

Edward Everett concluded by suggesting that "it would give him pleasure to have inserted in the N. American Review," of which he was at the time an enthusiastic editor, a contribution from McVickar. He reminded McVickar that the late Harvard professor, Levi Frisbie, wrote "the article on Smith's [Adam Smith's] Theory of Moral Sentiments in one of the early volumes of the N. A. Review." [1]

In reply McVickar sent Everett a copy of Say's *Treatise on Political Economy* with notes on his own points of disagreement. The Harvard professor acknowledged it saying, "I agree with you in your opinion of J. Say's work but I believe it may be mentioned in a way not to wound him. Nor, what is of more consequence, violate the truth—I expect for the July Number of the North American Review an article on questions of Political economy, in which this work will be named." [2]

Professor Philip Lindsly wrote McVickar from Princeton where he was then serving as acting president of the college. He said that he had "proposed an American edition of Mill to a professor of a neighbouring college more than six months ago," but added, "nothing has been done. I am heartily glad," he assured McVickar, "that you have undertaken this business & I wish you complete success." In recognition of John McVickar's position as an authority in this pioneering branch of learning, he declared, "I shall give your book the preference to all who have yet appeared so far as I am acquainted with them & I believe we have in our libraries here every treatise great & small, European & American, of any reputation, with which the public has been favored on the subject." Certainly at Princeton he could say that "as yet no text-book on the subject has been adopted by us & we are greatly in want of such a book." [3]

Lindsly was himself a pioneer in advanced education. It was in such spirit that, a little over a year after writing McVickar, he went to Tennessee as president of Cumberland College, later Nashville University, because, as he observed at the time, "throughout the immense valley of the lower Mississippi containing at least a million inhabitants, there exists not a single college."

McVickar also wrote to Union College in upstate Schenectady. Eliphalet Nott, who had already served eighteen of his sixty-two years as president of Union College, himself wrote to McVickar (December 24, 1822) that they had "no text book strictly speaking on Political Economy." He explained that "whatever is taught in this way is taught by lecture—when the classes are studying Paley and the Laws of Nations." And since in his judgment the science of political economy could hardly yet be considered as "a settled science," he assured Professor McVickar he would be "glad to see a work of the kind you propose." [4]

It was not until the summer of 1825 that McVickar was able to write, "My publication came out two days before leaving town." [5] His textbook on economics was the result of much research and consultation; it might have been a more formidable book if he had not been carrying so much added responsibility because of the illness of President Harris and the absence of Bishop Hobart in England. By chance, the publication of McVickar's text coincided with the establishment of the first chair in political economy at Oxford.

McVickar called his book *Outlines of Political Economy* and noted on the title page that it included a republication of an article by John Ramsay McCulloch taken from *The Edinburgh Supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica.* To this article he added "Notes Explanatory and Critical" and gave his own summary of the science as professor of moral philosophy and political economy in Columbia College, New York.[6]

This was not merely the first book on the science of political economy to be published in America, but it was also the only publication applying the principles of the new science to American conditions. The sum of those principles made the science, to McVickar's mind, "the moral instructor of nations." In England Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus had already established himself as a political economist, and McVickar did not feel the subject unrelated to his vocation as a priest.

"What religion reproves as wrong, political economy rejects as inexpedient," the Columbia professor declared. "What religion condemns as contrary to duty and virtue, political economy proves to be equally opposed to the peace, good order, and permanent prosperity of the community. Thus slave labor is exploded for its expensiveness, non-intercourse is condemned for its extravagance, privateering for its waste of wealth and war for the injury sustained even by the victor; and thus freedom of person, friendly intercourse between nations even in hostilities, and, if possible, universal peace—are supported by the all powerful consideration of self interest. . . ."

He then went on to point out that virtue in people was presupposed since "political economy is a science which guards against involuntary, not voluntary error," and therefore to be effective "must find public men true to their trust."

In due time letters of commendation on McVickar's *Outine of Political Economy* began to come from as far away as Quebec. Among them a letter from Chancellor Kent explained he had delayed writing until he had leisure to read the book. Now that he had "finished the careful perusal & study of the work," he wished McVickar to know that he was "in perfect admiration of the good sense, simplicity & beauty of the production." Referring to the notes of the author, he pronounced them "just & correct," saying that they showed "a clear analytical sagacity & a profound knowledge of the Science." He went so far as to say that he had "made himself master of the text & of the notes" and felt he had "derived a vast fund of valuable instruction from both." [7] Comments such as this made McVickar resolve on a further publication for the coming year.

* * *

John McVickar became the leading proponent of political economy in America not only because of the significance of his published works and voluminous correspondence, but also because of the unusual conversational ability with which he engaged men and women of influence in related fields. New York City as a financial center facilitated these contacts, but McVickar also traveled through his own and foreign countries to confer with politicians and economists. His prime concern in developing the subject was to teach people how to raise their standard of living.

As he continued his studies, John McVickar's lectures on political economy became more and more the fruit of his own thinking, so that he could refer to them merely as "liberally pursued on the principles of Adam Smith, Say & Ricardo." [8] David Ricardo's position as a leading economist was based on his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,* which appeared in England the year McVickar started his course in the subject at Columbia.

McVickar's second publication as professor of political economy was a treatise entitled *Interest Made Equity*. He made it clear that this book also included an "article upon the subject of interest contained in the supplement to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* from the pen of Mr. McCulloch." [9] John Ramsay McCulloch was a student of economics contributing articles to *The Scotsman* when McVickar became professor. Now as editor of that magazine, McCulloch had just published his *Principles of Political Economy.* The Scots statistician was two years younger than Prof Mac and not fully accepted in England. Nevertheless, McVickar's purpose in reprinting was to make the articles more accessible to the general public and, through his own comments and emendations, applicable to American conditions.

The professor was still hesitant of claiming authority in a subject which was as yet hardly understood as a science. However, again, as with his *Outlines of Political Economy,* he received much approval from men of practical vision. Business experts such as William Bard, who at this time was working out his plans in the new field of life insurance, wrote to thank McVickar for this publication "on the subject of Interest." Bard noted that it was executed with his brother-in-law's "usual ability" and added that it strengthened "the unanswerable arguments of the essay, on the propriety of leaving money, like anything else, to find its own value." [10] Political leaders also began to see practical relevance in what the Columbia professor was producing. James Tallmadge, for example, referring to the *Outlines of Political Economy,* wrote from Albany that he had "pursued the book with great satisfaction." The Lieutenant Governor's opinion of the work was summed up when he told McVickar "the public are under obligations to you for the learning, sound reasoning & good sense put forth in a book so portable and connected with a subject of such importance to the public mind." [11]

Even the aged Thomas Jefferson wrote McVickar from Monticello on March 30, 1826, in commendation of "the treatise." Jefferson explained that since he was "long withdrawn from the business of the world and little attentive to its proceedings," he rarely read anything "requiring very strenuous application of the mind." He expressed the opinion that "none requires it more than the subject of political Economy," and added encouragingly, "I rejoice to see that it is beginning to be cultivated in our schools." Then, speaking from his experience as the third president of the United States, he declared that "no country on earth requires a sound intelligence of it more than ours. The rising generation will I hope be qualified to set on it understandingly, and to correct the errors of their predecessors." [12]

Further suggestions followed from other quarters. "I know of nothing in our temporal concerns which could have better claim to public attention at this time," Isaac Bronson wrote McVickar, "than a short well-written tract explaining the elementary principles by which our banks of discount and deposit ought to be regulated." He pointed out that "the Legislature from whom the charters emanate seem to have been deplorably deficient in their knowledge of those principles, altho the subject had occupied no small portion of their time for many years past."

Then, in acknowledgment of John McVickar's position as a professor of political economy, he declared, "Your acquaintance with a science with which the principles of banking are intimately concerned, and indeed form a part, must eminently qualify you for the task, if your other occupations will permit you to turn your attention to the subject." In Bronson's opinion, most of the failures and misfortunes which plagued men of business were due to "the great fluctuation in prices." This, he felt, was caused by the employment of so large a portion of the monied capital of the country by the banks in their sixty-day operations. He called McVickar's attention to "the derangement which the best concerted plans of business must be subjected to when carried on upon a credit so uncertain both in its amt. & its duration as that must necessarily be which is furnished by the banks." [13]

This was part of an extended correspondence in which Bronson outlined among other things the harmful "effect of permitting powerful corporations to act independently of that legal responsibility which restrains individuals," [14] and led to McVickar's publishing a book which he entitled *Hints on Banking in a Letter to a Gentleman in Albany*.[15] His authorship was concealed under the *nom de plume* of "A New Yorker." In the course of this dissertation the professor proposed that instead of operating under a special charter of incorporation as banks did at that time in New York State, "banking should be a free trade to individuals or corporations under the provision of a general statute." He suggested further that nine-tenths of the banking capital be invested in government stock which would serve as a pledge of redemption for outstanding circulation. On all promissory notes the amount of "pledged stock" and the necessary signatures were to be clearly indicated, making sure that the deposit of stock could not decrease. Also, he strongly advised that no notes be issued of a denomination under five dollars.

He went on in this way, taking such principles of political economy as he had worked out and applying them to the problems of practical finance with the purpose of placing "the safety of the public beyond doubt or risk." The suggested provisions were not foolproof, he admitted, but neither were they "untried novelties" since they were for the most part "already established by the experience of other trades." [16]

The response to this book on banking reform was so immediate and diverse that John McVickar found himself drawn into writing articles on subjects related to political economy in such magazines as *The North American* and *The New York Review*. This in turn led to correspondence with financiers and political leaders. One of the latter was Edward Everett (formerly professor of Greek at Harvard) who was now serving in Congress and lending strong support to the bill proposing the establishment of a Bank of the United States. It was also the source of a lasting association with Albert Gallatin, who had returned from his diplomatic post abroad and was now considering a business proposition which would bring him to New York. With this encouragement McVickar continued studying and teaching economics as well as writing about it.

For some time Professor McVickar had been trying through legislation to bring about certain reforms suggested by his studies in political economy. To this end he enlisted the aid of friends in Washington, especially Congressman Guilian Verplanck. In 1829 McVickar wrote his *Considerations upon the Expediency of Abolishing Damages on Protested Bills of Exchange and the Effect of Establishing a Reciprocal Exchange with Europe* and published it with a report made to Congress on the subject three years earlier.[17] While this did not stir up enough support to obtain the desired legislation, the book was later well received in London. Other attempts to educate the public in the need for legislative reform in economic matters were more successful. McVickar lived to see several state laws to which he had objected become dead letters.

Two years after McVickar's death, John E. Williams, then president of the Metropolitan Bank of New York, who described himself as a practical man of business, an everyday banker, observed, "It really seems wonderful that a scholar, investigating the subject of Political Economy on purely scientific principles should be able to see, not only the practical workings of existing laws, and understand the indissoluble relations of money and trade, but should also be able to foresee and foretell what changes are necessary to produce the highest prosperity and secure the greatest safety to the community." To him it seemed perfectly clear that the writings of John McVickar possessed this power, and he gave as an example McVickar's essay on *The Evils of Divers State Laws to regulate Damages on Foreign Bills of Exchange.*[18]

McVickar's reputation as an economist spread abroad and he received invitations to visit several foreign countries. The Lieutenant Governor of Bermuda, Sir Hilgrove Turner, wrote him regarding the shipping tie-up in 1829 which he attributed to "the business of our politicians." It prompted him, he told the professor, "again to advert to your political economy, a science of the highest importance to mankind, alas too little understood: as to Greeks and Romans it is maiden ground, and almost to ourselves, neither have left us anything of value on political economy. The science is in its infancy, theory loses itself in mazes and only a close observation of effects and causes will produce light." [19]

* * *

McVickar's proposal in 1830 of "a great naval school" for the United States was not realized until fifteen years later, when his colleague in secondary education, George Bancroft, as Secretary of Navy founded a "Naval School" in Annapolis. McVickar's conferences with the chairman of the Naval Committee and others revealed their need for understanding the principles of political economy. Interest in the subject was expressed not only by the American legislators but also by many of the foreign representatives in Washington. Their recognition of McVickar as an economist was a foretaste of his experience in Europe during the following year.

John McVickar now embarked on a new endeavor toward college extension. He proposed establishing a naval school in connection with Columbia. To this end he advocated offering facilities in the college for instruction of "midshipmen and young officers stationed at New York harbor." The trustees were sufficiently impressed with the suggestion to send him to Washington to explain its nature and advantages to the authorities there. He took with him Eliza and their daughter Anna.

From Washington, D.C., he wrote on April 1 that "at nine, I meet by appointment General Hayne (Mr. Webster's opponent)." [20] McVickar recalled that earlier in the same year the former attorney general of South Carolina had engaged in his greatest debate with Daniel Webster regarding the respective powers of the federal government and the individual states.

"He is chairman of the Naval Committee in the Senate," the professor wrote back to Columbia, "where our only hope lies, unless I can effect something with the President, on whom I call at Half past two." And so it was that Robert Young Hayne received McVickar "in his parlor, rather a small man," Prof Mac described the thirty-nine-year-old senator from South Carolina, "youthful in looks, though called forty-five, very gentlemanly and conversable, but with a tone of great decision. He was very frank in his views, and put his opposition on the ground of its economy."

McVickar's arguments for the advantage to the Navy of an educational program among its younger personnel produced an unexpected effect. Although he finally succeeded in persuading Hayne of the need "for a great naval school," the senator considered it should be purely a federal institution, independent of any college. Further Hayne felt "the government had money, and would spend it, so expense was no consideration."

"But," said the professor of political economy, "is there not a previous question a legislator should ask—why the government should have a surplus?"

"True," the senator observed dubiously, and after a pause concluded, "but there I despair."

The professor rejoined tartly, pressing the logic of the argument, "Then you are no good citizen."

This brought the professor to a lively exposition of the lack of understanding of political economy in the general government.

The discussion concluded amicably, however, and Prof Mac finally left with a bundle of Senator Hayne's speeches in his pocket and with the impression that Robert Young Hayne was "a clear, warm-hearted man, but no rival to Webster."

It was arranged that Hugh Lawson White, who engaged McVickar's interest because he had been president of the Bank of the State of Tennessee when he was elected to fill the unexpired term of Andrew Jackson in the Senate, should accompany him to the White House. So at seven o'clock that night, McVickar related, "Mr. Hone, Mr. White and myself drove to the palace, as they term it."

He went on to describe how "we were ushered through a great and desolate looking hall into a splendid parlor, ceilings twenty five feet high. The room was empty, President Jackson engaged with the heads of department, but we were begged to wait his leisure. He soon came down accompanied by two gentlemen. Three ladies of his family were soon after introduced and tea and coffee were then served." The talk seemed to be confined to generalities, but McVickar noted that on "taking leave, the President begged him to come up early in the morning," when he would have "some conversation" with him.

The impression on first meeting a man of such crude and fiery reputation who had completely upset the political applecart with his declaration, "Our Union, it must be preserved," was a surprise to McVickar. The professor noted his impression of the sixty-three-year-old President by saying, "I tell you plainly that could I forget his name was Jackson, and all the associations connected with it, I should describe him as one of the most gentlemanly old men I have ever met with; mild, courteous and polite, with an air of sedateness approaching to melancholy and with a tinge of disease or feeble health,—a very interesting man."

John McVickar found unexpected contacts in Washington, for "many old persons" spoke to him of his father, the linen merchant. Among them was one who came up to him with the exclamation, "Sir, yours was one of the greatest commercial houses of our country." Prof Mac's family connection with the late Henry

Brockholst Livingston, who had served on the Supreme Court in Washington for twenty-four years, "secured a bond of acquaintance with Chief Justice Marshall."

This led to John Marshall's proposal of an early Sunday morning jaunt into the country. During the course of it, according to Prof Mac, they had "a long talk and walk together," but he was surprised "to be distanced" by a man of Judge Marshall's age. About halfway to Georgetown McVickar himself turned back for church, while, he said, the Chief Justice "went on his solitary walk of eight or ten miles."

The need for a naval academy, whether at Columbia or elsewhere, that the professor had planted in the minds of the legislators, he now felt would have to take its own course; but what was proving stimulating and profitable was the exchange of ideas with these government officials on the subject of political economy. His scientific approach to what was their official responsibility made him a center of attention.

There was a dinner given for him by "Mr. Vaughan, the British minister," who was counted to live "in handsome style, and his dinners more *recherché* than those of any other." Charles Richard Vaughan, who was soon to be knighted for his services, had long been a fellow of All Souls College and was pleased to recognize the scholarly visitor. Invited to meet the professor of political economy were "baron Stackelberg, charge from Sweden, Pedersen from Denmark, Neiderstetter from Prussia, Tacon, minister-resident of Spain, Mr. Bankhead, secretary of the legation and count de Menon, charge of France," all of whom suggested his visiting their countries.[21]

Daniel Webster, as his host in Washington, was also there and on the following night gave the professor of political economy a dinner at his own residence and invited to meet him General William Henry Harrison, Governor John Tyler of Virginia, Edward Everett, who as representative from Massachusetts was supporting the proposal for a Bank of the United States, and certain foreign diplomats.

Daniel Webster's first wife had died and recently he had married Caroline LeRoy, a young and popular member of one of New

York's old families. The close association between the LeRoys and the McVickars now afforded them a pleasant entrée to Washington society. Mrs. Webster graciously entertained Eliza McVickar and her beautiful daughter Anna, while Prof Mac found the contact with political personalities and the exchange of ideas on world economics stimulating. For example, at one of Daniel Webster's evening parties, Poinsett was there, recently returned from his official duties in Mexico, and John Caldwell Calhoun. Both men had received doctorates from Columbia at the same time as McVickar. After a long conversation with Calhoun, who was now serving his second term as Vice President, McVickar concluded he was "rather a talented than a great man."

Although Webster was only five years his senior, in McVickar's estimation there was only "one great man" in Washington in those days. He declared that Webster "walks among others with a weight of character and talent that overawes. What he says you remember; there is a power and truth in it—that one can not forget." [22] Correspondence with such men as Martin Van Buren drew McVickar's interest into international affairs,[23] but it was Webster who convinced him that conversations with men who were shaping the destinies of Europe would be of value to his study of political economy. After John McVickar had returned home to "8 Columbia College," Daniel Webster wrote to say he was glad he was planning "a voyage to Europe," and offered to send him an introduction to William Cabell Rives whom President Jackson had recently sent to France as United States minister.

At the professor's request that he might carry certain of his speeches to Europe, Webster sent him "half a dozen," but hoped he would have with him "other and better samples of our American efforts in debate." In the packet which came from the senator, McVickar found "a copy or two of a speech on the tariff in 1824," concerning which Webster commented, "probably you never read it, but it purports to treat some subjects which belong to your department."

In his letter Daniel Webster ventured "to hazard one little prophecy. It is that when you shall have read everything ever published on political economy, and seen and studied the states of

Europe, you will come to the conclusion that political economy is a science of wise and clear general rules, but so vastly diversified in their practical application as to be worse than useless in the hands of any who have not the broadest knowledge and the nicest discrimination; and that so many circumstances belong to each particular case that no wide general principle can be safely trusted to govern it." [24]

The very day Daniel Webster was writing McVickar (April 24, 1830) the Columbia trustees granted their "professor of etc. etc." his first sabbatical leave. William Beach Lawrence, who had been secretary of the legation at London was to take over his lectures on political economy, and Edmund Griffin was given the rhetoric and belles lettres courses.[25]

John McVickar had mentioned to his friend Albert Gallatin that the purpose of his trip, aside from health, was to seek "information touching Govt Policy & the question of Political Economy. My former visit to England twenty five years ago," he explained, "I went introduced by Sir W. Scott as he then was & became acquainted with Lord Lyndhurst & Mr. Herries, but the interval is too long."

Gallatin's response was to send him a letter of introduction to John Prevost who, he assured McVickar, was "very well informed" and would let him know "whatever related to exchange, gold and silver, etc. and," he observed, "he is a perfect twig of political economy. His father was an eminent Professor of Moral Philosophy at Geneva, editor of the Biblotheque etc.; his partner, William Haldimand M.P., was the only bank director who gave rational answers & founded on sound principles to the committee of the House of Lords when specie payments were resumed; his aunt, Mrs. Jane Marcet, is the author of *Conversations on Chemistry*, on *Political Economy*, etc." [26]

There were introductions to literary circles such as Bishop Hobart's to the Lake poets, saying, "I never passed my time more delightfully than with Southey & Wordsworth. I think you will be pleased with them," and urging McVickar to "escape from London as soon as possible & go to the Lakes & Holland & then to Switzerland & at least Northern Italy." David Hosack wrote to a fellow of the Royal Society, William Vaughan, to say that he would find McVickar "a gentleman of distinguished abilities and learning," and to suggest he be given "access to your learned men and some of your distinguished institutions."

David Hosack was already a bit discouraged about his new medical college in New Jersey. His practice in New York could be taken over by his son, returning from abroad to start a surgical career. With the prospect of retiring as Dr. Bard had done at about the age of fifty, Hosack had purchased the Hyde Park residence which William Bard was forced to sell. To this country estate Hosack escaped from his elaborate town house, which N. P. Willis described at this time as "a perfect palace." By 1828 he had not only acquired the Bard place on the Hudson but also the McVickar cottage-rectory. The transfer of an estate that had been in Eliza McVickar's family since that April day in 1705 when it had been granted to her ancestor by Queen Anne's cousin was not easy. As Prof Mac put it, "The removal of an old family is like the transplanting of an old tree, it requires a long time to settle & after all perhaps never thrives so well as in its first home." However, it made it easier to plan for a year abroad.

As the packet ship *Ontario* dropped down the bay, John McVickar and Eliza with their two older daughters beside them stood on the deck looking back at the small but promising community clustered about the Battery. Since they had taken up their abode at Columbia, the city had more than doubled in population to about 500,000. In some ways New York City appeared to McVickar like a self-conscious youth in outgrown clothes who needed guidance. But the burden of responsibility was lifted from Prof Mac's mind by the twenty-four-day voyage. It was a round of "wit and Humour" thanks to good weather and good companions who joined in editing an amusing ship's gazette.

PART II

CHAPTER 1

The Culture That Was London

Coleridge and English Hospitality . . . Familiar People and Strange Places

THE year McVickar had spent in England after first taking his degree at Columbia had been an important experience. It made all the more interesting his return visit in 1830, twenty-five years later. His approach to foreigners in their own country was courteous but critical. His purpose was to learn so that he might the better teach at home. At the same time where he found error or ignorance he sought to correct it. He carried important letters but his keen intellect was his most effective introduction.

On May 25 John McVickar's journal noted that a noble westerly wind brought them through the Needles. "At the rate of 10 Knots —we flew past all the beauties of the Isle of Wight" into the sheltered harbor of Portsmouth. Their anchors were then "slung over the side of the Ship into a cutter" which carried them to "the pebbly Beach." There the passengers were landed at the back of their hotel.[1]

The next morning at ten o'clock they "mounted the top of the London bus & set off in high style." During the six-hour drive the professor admired "the constant succession of Villas & Cottages—all beautiful—roses & honeysuckles in fullest bloom & neatness everywhere—so much so that it looks like a national or constitutional virtue—nothing dirty—nothing out of order. I had travelled the same road 25 years before," he observed, "& I began to predict the peculiarities of the country with wonderful exactness."

After their first night in London at a fashionable hotel the professor found more adequate quarters for his family in Regent

Street, where he learned his fellow Club member, Jonathan Goodhue was stopping. In what Prof Mac called "this new & splendid Street," a curving thoroughfare completed a decade before by John Nash to unite Carlton House with his Regents Park, the McVickars occupied "two parlours & two bedrooms—beautifully & conveniently furnished," with cook and serving man in attendance. Their windows looked out "on the restless scene of wealth & fashion & rolling equipages." He soon found, however, "the Hacks are not fit to ride in—so to do the thing genteely—I made arrangement for a beautiful landau" with which he hired a coachman and horses by the week. In this he drove around delivering his letters of introduction which he found "seem to grow upon me instead of decreasing."

The first afternoon of his return home McVickar was greeted with the "cheerful New York voices" of his cousin "Mrs. DeRham, her husband & Julia sitting with Eliza." Washington Irving had already been there offering to direct them to whatever they might wish to see or hear in the British capital, and later in the day the professor "found Mr. Bates, partner of Baring's house, waiting to see me—with an invitation to the girls from Mrs. B. who had called in the morng to accompany her to the opera."

On their first Sunday in London the McVickars decided to hear a certain Scottish divine whose *Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns* McVickar had read. Moreover, the ladies had been told of Wilberforce's often repeated phrase, "all the world is wild about Dr. Chalmers." On hearing his sermon, McVickar was himself "excited by the eloquent vehemence" of Thomas Chalmers and stopped to have a talk with him after service. Chalmers had been a guest at the recent meeting of the Political Economy Club, and the professor suggested he write more in this field, which the future founder of the "Free Church of Scotland" did two years later.

There was another well-known Scottish divine in London destined to found a church of a different sort, who had once been Chalmer's assistant at St. John's in Glasgow. McVickar planned to take the family in the evening to the church he had recently built on Regent Square nearby. Word had reached America of how the apocalyptic lectures of this Edward Irving had been thronged in Edinburgh, and an acquaintance had just intrigued the curiosity of the ladies by relating how Irving had once fallen in love with a Jane Welsh whom he had introduced to Thomas Carlyle, with the result that Carlyle married the girl. The Carlyles were now living in a cottage in Dumfrieshire, where he continued to write magazine articles. Chalmers had spoken deprecatingly of Irving's "bravures and flourishes," however, and John McVickar himself came away from the "National Scotch Church" on Regent Square "disgusted by the rant and grotesque acting" of the celebrated Edward Irving. In his journal McVickar wrote, "I can only say I felt in quitting his Chapel as if it Required a lustration to purify & cleanse me from such folly & insanity."

After a seven o'clock dinner that night with the Casimir De-Rhams, the McVickars drove on to pay their respects to the American minister, Louis McLane. There the journal noted they met the secretary, "Mr. W. Irving who had already called upon us," and Christopher Hughes, an American diplomat and wit whose quick observation and accurate judgement McVickar regarded highly. John Thornton Kirkland, a former president of Harvard College during its "Augustan Age," was also there.

After a Monday morning spent in the "crowded marts" of the old city of London, McVickar and his family drove off toward Hackney to call on Henry Handley Norris, who had been an undergraduate at Peterhouse with Archibald McVickar. This Anglican priest was known to Prof Mac, through letters he had written Bishop Hobart, as an official of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.[2] That night the professor noted in his diary, "We met a Clergyman on horseback—of middle age—gray & dignified in appearance—& with one of those strong prepossessions that some times comes over one—I felt convinced that it was the gentleman I was seeking—but the indecorum of stopping him upon an idle thought prevented my acting on it, & we drove on. It proved when we arrived to have been a true presentament & I devoutly regretted not having spoken from the cold inhospitable manner of his Lady whom we found at home." At first this appeared to McVickar "a national or at least a London trait—they always receive you as if you come to inform upon their politeness or cheat them into civilities they are not inclined to." However, he added, "The ride was delightful & we returned in good humour to a late dinner."

Another day of embarrassment followed when the family drove to Richmond on the mistaken information that they would there see "one of the old fashioned English fairs." The only consolation given them was that there had been one "the day before not far off at Twickenham Green." After a long ramble through the park, they decided to make up for the loss of the fair by returning through Kew. On arriving at the gates of the "Queen's Palace and Gardens," they found that nothing but a special order from some official authority could admit them. As a last recourse the professor presented his card and, he noted, "Much to my surprise it was taken & we were admitted— Here we wandered enchanted thro' the pleasure grounds, loitered around the temples & rustic seats & listened to the lark & all the birds of song with which the grounds abounded— In the course of our stroll seeing a gate open giving access to a noble garden in an evil hour we entered in—roved from green house to hot house—& thro' shrubberies so artfully assayed & divided by lofty roses or box etc.—that at length we got completely bewildered. Here my bad genius prompted me to call an undergardner from his work to direct me—he stared on my explaining to him how we had come in—& immediately called an upper gardner who sent for the foreman & the foreman for his principal who very politely told us that it was impossible we could be allowed to proceed."

That evening they "drank tea at home" and ordered the carriage at half past nine for "Mr. Bates' musical party," their first London soirée. Joshua Bates, an American by birth, was at this time a leading partner in the great house of Baring Brothers, which led in financing the foreign trade of the United States. McVickar had previously presented a letter of introduction to Alexander Baring, a chancellor of the Exchequer in the Wellington cabinet, and this connection led to much interesting conversation on the subject of banking.

The professor described how, on their entering the noble house on Portland Place, their names were announced from the foot of the stairs to the landing and again to the drawing room door, both folds of which were thereupon thrown open as they entered. He felt the etiquette was an awkward one, the ladies walking in alone, the gentlemen following. His first impression was that in the English mode of reception there was "little either of grace or courtesy—on the contrary it is familiar without kindness—cold without being dignified." The party was a small one with some rare musical talent. He noted "a moderation in the refreshments which in New York would be termed mean—but which here is universal in good Society & is I think in better taste than our overloaded & extravagent profusion."

This was one of several such "London parties" about which the professor observed, "The settled rule of English Society is *no introductions,* but perfect freedom of address to any (right of acquaintance there and then but no where else to any future encounter)." This, he felt, "to an American is difficult especially toward the cold & supercillious English—their repulsive monosyllabic answers are almost ludicrous in their insolence." At one such gathering he declared, "Before 12 the party thinned down to a few when a little rational conversation redeemed the character of a London Starvation Squeeze."

Nevertheless, among the Bates' guests he was introduced to Charles Robert Leslie, now a Royal Academician, who had roomed with Sam Morse when they were both art students in London. He inquired of Professor McVickar the prospects of teaching drawing in America, and three years later he did come to teach at West Point for a short period. Raphael Lamar West was also there, of whom Leslie spoke as having more talent than industry. His father, Benjamin West, in his beginning days in New York had been one of Dr. John Bard's protégés. Another guest, introduced as Napoleon's medical biographer, O'Meara, McVickar to his embarrassment mistook for a Dr. Stockoe. The professor remembered the latter, who had also attended Bonaparte, as having "visited us" at Columbia College. Harry Edward O'Meara had been the emperor's surgeon in St. Helena and soon made himself known as the author of *Napoleon in Exile.* O'Meara was then preparing his *Memoirs,* and McVickar recalled that he had been rather eulogized in Byron's *Age of Bronze.*

They returned home at a time that in New York would have been considered late, but as the professor observed, "in London the distinction of hours is lost." At midnight the street under their windows was "as gay & full of equipages as at noonday & many shops still open." It was this life of the people which interested him more than distinguished individuals. For this reason he resolved to seek out another fair, this time at Greenwich.

They were delayed in getting off by "those very genteel pushing vendors of petty trifles" who invaded their apartments, but finally with their shipmate of the *Ontario,* Charles Ker, as guide they drove off across Westminster Bridge and on through Dulwich and Deptford, where the professor saw "the great national dock yards." They found Greenwich in the last day of its fair "attracting great crowds of the middle & lower class in neat covered carts—various trams or omnibus—& still more on foot." Their first object of interest was the Royal Hospital where, among the old veterans sunning themselves in their cocked hats, the professor noticed "several blacks—whom I felt inclined to address by the familiar appelation of Peter or Jack & claim them for my countrymen." The fair answered all their expectations— "Punch & his feats, Harlequin & his tricks with all rural finery & childish toys." On their return they stopped at the Asylum for the Indigent Blind and noted the use of "music & singing" to qualify the inmates for organists and afford them relaxation.

On Friday, June 4, Henry Norris, as prebendary of St. Paul's, sent the McVickars tickets to what the professor believed was "the most imposing & interesting exhibition London can boast." Under the dome of Wren's great cathedral, they were placed "near the seats of the Duke of Gloucester, Lord Bexley etc." and were enthralled by the chanting of eight thousand charity childern in their annual service. This was one of the many occasions the McVickars were "accompanied by young Mr. Irving, attache to the Embassy." After the service they proceeded with Washington Irving to the palace of St. James, where Queen Anne and the Georges had lived from time to time, to inquire after the health of His Majesty, George IV, who was not expected to live. In the Tudor courtyard they passed the guards and gentlemen-in-waiting and were ushered through passages and *salons* upstairs into the receiving rooms. There the professor's diary recorded, "Lord Fife, the Lord of the Bedchamber, stepped forward and presented for our inspection the written Bulletin of the morng, signed by the attending physicians."

After the "Royal visit" they drove to the residence of the late Reginald Heber in Clarence Terrace, where they found the bishop's widow in "a moderate sized but beautiful library," seated at a table covered with books and writing. When the bishop of Calcutta had died four years earlier he was only forty-three. Such hymns as *Holy, Holy, Holy, From Greenland's Icy Mountains,* and *The Son of God Goes Forth to War,* which he had written as a young man, were often sung in American homes and churches. As for Amelia Heber's rotund figure, which Prof Mac heard could not be exaggerated, he expressed himself as "agreeably disappointed—tho' large she is graceful with a very sweet voice & pleasing, courteous & even kind manners," so much so that she engaged us to breakfast." Because of Mrs. Heber's "curiosity about our native Indians," Eliza McVickar promised to add to her store of East Indian treasures a handsome pair of Indian moccasins which she had brought from America. Later Mrs. Heber presented the professor with one of the "long expected volumes just issued from the press" of her biography of the late bishop Heber.[3]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge had written McVickar suggesting a visit, so that after dinner that evening, with Charles Ker again as his conductor, he "set off for a 4 mile ride to Highgate" where the poet lived.

"We stopped on our way," he wrote, "for the Rev. Edward Irving, much of my annoyance."

They found the divine "in a great house, miserably furnished, at tea with his wife and two little children. After tea, with a solemn air he laid his hands on the heads of the two children, prayed for and blessed them." In the course of the drive which followed, "Mr. Irving grew upon" McVickar because he found in him "much simplicity and better sense" than he had expected.

They talked of the poet they were about to see. Irving declared that young English churchmen considered him "the greatest religious thinker of their time," adding that since the days of Samuel Johnson there had been no such intellectual power in England." McVickar gathered that Samuel Taylor Coleridge was "an Enthusiast idolized, I had almost said worshipped, by Enthusiasts," the son of a clergyman, a Bluecoat boy, an Oxford scholar, and in early life a skeptic. It was well known that together with Robert Southey and the Quaker poet Robert Lovell, Coleridge hoped to find in America "retirement from the world and all the errors of a Social State." Irving reminded McVickar of how the three poets had then married three sisters, "but Coleridge's proved unfortunate—he became a drunkard & an opium eater—separated from his wife & sunk into infamy—a lost character." It was then that James Gilman, called in as Coleridge's medical advisor, had invited him to his home for a fortnight that he might better attend to him. In front of the entrance to that house where the doctor had "kept him for 15 years in every comfort and luxury," Professor McVickar's carriage now drew up.

The house itself, from which had come forth *Christobal* and *Kubla Khan* and such prose work as Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* (a book McVickar was later to edit for the American public), awakened a certain excitement in him. The author had been described as thin and pale, having a wide mouth with thick lips, not very good teeth and longish halfcurling rough black hair, but to the professor Coleridge appeared "a man over 60 of powerful make—large head, massive features & large & expressive eyes tho' rather dreamy." Seated in the parlor with him was his daughter, the fair Sara, hardly a year married to the poet's nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge. McVickar was to remember her as "one of the prettiest & most learned women in England."

The conversation of the author of *The Ancient Mariner* struck John McVickar as "that of a lofty religious enthusiast," and at the same time "full of deep and original thought, with a flow & power of expression" he had never heard equaled. The topics Coleridge discussed were varied: his treatise on *Church and State,* just completed, his poetry, etc.,—all with a "tendency to the deep and personal truths of Xianity." Finally Irving "drew from his pocket" a letter from the celebrated Thomas Erskine of Edinburgh.

That member of the brilliant legal circle of Edinburgh had published his interpretations of the mystical side of Calvinism and of psychological conditions corresponding with doctrines of grace. With them McVickar was familiar. As Irving read aloud Erskine's description of the "wonderful effusion of tongues" in the family of Campbells near Greenock, Professor McVickar became convinced of its harmful implications. It seemed to indicate that many were coming to believe there was an actual revival of the apocalyptic gifts of prophecy taking place in that remote corner of Scotland. Coleridge's philosophy, especially those aspects which were mystical and obscure, had for some time influenced Edward Irving's own pattern of thought, so that when he finished reading the letter he asked the poet-philosopher, "How is this to be regarded?"

"Sir, I make no question," Coleridge declared with solemnity and certainty, "but that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and a foretaste of that spiritual power which is to be poured forth on the reviving Church of Scotland."

This oracular utterance of Coleridge's was too much for John McVickar, who did not hesitate to "press upon him its want of accord with the scriptural account of the gift of tongues," and followed the objection with his opinion that it seemed unworthy "not alone of the wisdom of God but of the reason of man."

Coleridge answered as though interested to hear his own opinion questioned. "Was not the case the same in the Apostle's days? Is not St. Paul's argument in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians founded upon the supposition that the saints often spoke in tongues which no man understood?"

McVickar came right back with such conclusive quotations from the suggested chapter that Coleridge "finally cut short the argument with denying the genuineness of the chapter itself and concluded with reiterating his first assertion."

As they drove away, the Scots divine admitted to McVickar that Coleridge's words sank into his mind "like seeds into the ground; they grow up afterwards, I know not how, and bear fruit."

Before long Edward Irving was excommunicated by the Presbytary of London because of his approval of the "Tongues" and declared unfit to remain as minister of the church where the McVickars had heard him preach. The result was that two years later he founded a new society called the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

On the point the professor had ventured to oppose the poet, he had found him "a cautious tho' powerful opponent." Nevertheless McVickar's reaction to what he termed Coleridge's "wild opinions" was that "with all his errors he both was and is a wonderful man." To this effect McVickar wrote of the "evening with Coleridge," telling Bishop Hobart in New York that although he feared the poet had "nearly passed the narrow limits which divide Genius from Madness," he was still "full of talent." In reference to Hobart's advice about avoiding London, McVickar let him know Coleridge had said that "Southey & Wordsworth were at the Lakes" and that he was sure the bishop's "letters would secure him the kindest reception."

* * *

The definite ideas with which McVickar came before the public, whether in art, science, or literature, were not achieved without exploration of opposing opinions. His mingling with members of the Parliament against which his own people had so recently revolted, and his paying respect to the dying king, typified McVickar's sympathy for men whose ideas he would not hesitate to oppose. Further, he sought acquaintance with Whig and Tory, nonconformist and churchman, labor and capital, that his opinions might be truly his own, based on personal observation and not blindly taken from others.

One week had passed and there were still sights to be seen. This Saturday it was Somerset House, where the McVickars found "the pictures were more numerous than splendid," and among the statues admired "one of Bp Heber to be erected in St. Paul's." From there they proceeded to the Royal Society rooms and "dwelt with great interest on the pages of the Book of Membership containing the actual signatures—the sign manual of all its members & Patrons beginning with its Founder Charles II." [4]

Another day it was the Zoological Gardens, where they spent two hours viewing the animals "all arranged & disposed according to their native habits & free so far as safety admitted." At the vast Coliseum the principal attraction seemed to be a scenic effect as from "the top of the dome of St. Paul's." Prof Mac declared that the illusion of immense depth and distance was complete so that "even with telescope" it could not be detected. Such a day would start with the professor's daughters, Anna and Mary, going with their "beaux" for a horseback ride in Hyde Park, and conclude with a dance or attendance at the opera "under the care of Mr. Goodhue & Mr. Irving."

On Sunday McVickar observed "the streets were quiet beyond those of New York," and occupying the Joshua Bates pew at Portland Chapel he noted "like other fashionables it is in the gallery & liveried servants who attend & open the doors have their rows of pews at a distance behind their Masters." The professor was himself an ardent promoter of free pews in churches in New York. On their return to Regent Street they found waiting for them "Dr. Bowring (the Jacobinical Editor of the *Westminster*) but a very agreeable modest & well informed man—he had called with Col. Thompson former Gov. of Sierra Leone but now better known as the Author of a most agreeable Pamphlet—'Catechism on the Corn Laws'." Thomas Perronet Thompson was later to become a member of the London Political Economy Club, while John Bowring, who had taken on Jeremy Bentham's magazine when James Mill declined the editorship, was just publishing his own *Poetry of the Magyars*. He was later associated with Cobden in forming the Anti-Corn Law League and was knighted when he was governor of Hong Kong. "These sat with us till Church time," the McVickar journal recorded.

The church to which the McVickars went for their second service was Trinity in Mary le Bone "with desk & pulpit on opposite sides of equal height & both occupied by clergyman—the middle aisle is near 12 feet wide & has a row of fixed comfortable seats for the poor reaching from the door to the pulpit." It drew from the professor the comment that "tho' the English Church may be lordly it is yet a kindly one & preaches the Gospel to the poor much more literally than its democratic descendants do with us."

Because of McVickar's delight in art he was urged to visit Lord Grosvnor, "especially on the score of the interest I had taken in the children of his friend More." He learned that the wealthy earl had "recently purchased the King of Sarawak's collection of pictures & is erecting a Gallery for their reception." Sir Thomas Lawrence, president of the Royal Academy had died in January, and there was a one-day exhibit of his pictures to which they were invited. "It is in truth a most splendid collection," McVickar wrote, "the King & nobility & gentry having sent all of this Artist's works in their possession to form a great coul d'oeil of portrait painting." There was of course the National Gallery "of first rate pictures" to which they went "& eventually to Westminster Abbey—the noblest monument (I conceive) taken altogether with its tombs, & besides inscriptions its busts, statues & associations, that the world can shew of piety, genius & art."

When McVickar found he could break away from the social affairs which involved the ladies, he wrote, "I escaped to the Parliament House to visit the House of Lords where they are not admissible—I found it occupied by the Chancellor & Judges in their full-bottomed wigs & long gowns—as the Chief Justice passed me on the Court breaking up, his train was carried by a page 3 yards behind him— The House of Commons was just gathering & I had the honour of messing about among the members & dreaming for the moment that I was an M P myself." In the days immediately following, McVickar was to make his own contribution to this legislative body. For the present he drove to the City to deliver "my last letter of Introduction." There he stopped in at the "Kings Bench & Guildhall where Brougham was moving about but not speaking." In another month's time, however, Henry Peter Brougham was to make his famous speech in Parliament, bringing forward the motion against slavery, and before the year was out he was to receive the peerage as chancellor.

John McVickar returned home "just in time to dress for dinner" with Lady Affleck. There was a family connection through the Moores of Newton, and the late Sir Edmund Affleck had been commissioner of the Port of New York in 1781. "Our dinner was better than grand," the professor declared, "it was gay—tho' it consisted but of four octogenarians, three ladies & one Gent; besides Lady A. & ourselves—the ladies were of a species we know little of in America—wealthy old dowagers who keep up at 80 the spirits & fashion of their youth—they were clever in their way—& might have sat to Walter Scott as originals—The Gent: but you may judge of his years when I tell you he was the confidential Secy. of Warren Hastings in India & retained the dress and manners of those most aristocratic days. He & I occupied the head & foot of the table & entertained each other after the ladies had gone—he with tales of 'auld Lang syne' & I with the wonders of our western wilds." McVickar was amazed at the secretary's "praise of Hastings," as he insisted that instead of being cruel or rapacious the governor-general of India had been "kind & liberal even to a fault."

The promised breakfast at Mrs. Heber's "redeemed London Society" for the McVickars. Except for three ladies and Lady Newton all the guests were men. Basil Hall, who had recently published an account of his travels in America that had excited indignation in the United States, was there with his wife. McVickar noted that "Capt & Mrs. Hall both seem very anxious to make up by politeness for the superciliousness of his book." Nevertheless the professor could say of the party, "The whole was truly delightful, cheerful easy conversation—with a sufficient dash of literature to elevate it above common talk without rendering it pedantic." He was impressed especially with two leading members of the House of Commons, "Sir Thomas Acland of the country party and Sir Robert Inglis a sound sensible Member from Oxford (the successor to a more talented but not better man Sir Robert Peel)." There was also present the bishop of Llandaff (once professor of poetry at Oxford and now dean of St. Paul's), Edward Copleston. McVickar knew of him as an economist and counted him "one of the ablest writers on the Rt. Revd. Bench."

John McVickar made it a practice to walk through the streets window shopping and talking with the people. That evening, finding himself in the neighborhood, he strolled to the palace, where he observed "an immense throng of coaches of the Nobility & Gentry" to inquire of the king's health. Among the exhibitions "of ingenious art," he saw in a cutler's window "a mass of blades issuing in every direction from a great handle—I went in & enquired the number & found it to be 700, each of wh. shut with accuracy." On returning home he was handed a note from the politician Joseph Hume, who had been for thirty years a leader of the Radical party. It was to inform McVickar of "an interesting debate in the House of Commons" that evening with a suggestion that he attend. This was an evidence, as he later wrote the bishop of New York, of the "liberal & kind feelings towards our country" which McVickar was finding expressed especially by these members of the opposition who seemed to "laud everything American."

At seven o'clock McVickar arrived at the House of Commons and sent his card to Joseph Hume, who came out and, as the professor recorded it in his journal, "introduced me with the Speaker's permission wh. is always requisite on the floor—the seargeant at arms in his full suit of black with bag wig & small sword ushering me in & crying out, 'Privilege, Privilege'." On being seated Hume placed himself behind McVickar and pointed out "all the clever men who were in view." Unfortunately the "interesting debate" did not come up and the House was poorly attended. The professor's first impression was that it was "a small room for such a body, with little order & still less attention paid to the speakers unless when a clever & known man is up—I was not so fortunate—A very tiresome country member was on his legs who after speaking for above an hour without being listened to or heard sat down thanking the House for the polite attention they had afforded him—It is only wonderful how the mass of real business they must have is got thro'—but with all this—their debates are infinitely more interesting than those I lately listened to at Washington—There is in their speeches no political slang—no studied eloquence—& little of what I most hate Jacobinism—I took a comfortable nap as I observed several members doing when a stupid man got up—& came away about 12."

There followed a night at the Athenaeum and a visit to the British Museum, where McVickar had a letter to "Mr. Ellis the Principal." In the museum he studied the Elgin marbles, exclaiming that they surpassed "any expectations I had formed & justify what I always hitherto thought the extravagant eulogium of Artists." Their friend, Lady Buller, joined the party as they passed into the "recently erected" Royal Library. Libraries had a particular interest for John McVickar in New York. Now in London he was shown a reading room which purported to be "one of the largest & noblest (it is said) in the world—the library itself was collected by George III & presented by the present King." McVickar was not impressed, however, with the system as Henry Ellis explained it. Although Ellis was soon to be honored with knighthood, McVickar was not surprised to learn in the course of a few years that he had been replaced because of his unprogressive methods.

At six o'clock that evening they dined with William Vaughan, to whom Dr. Hosack had given McVickar a letter of introduction. Vaughan, who had two brothers of distinction in America, was, as McVickar put it, "an old Bachelor but keeping hospitable Bachelors' hall" in the City of London. He was said to have been "the original proposer of the great commercial docks," to have promoted the building of canals, and was at the head of many of the "greatest improvements of the city." Now McVickar found him "a little past his prime," but was only able to break away from his "almost proverbial" hospitality at ten o'clock, "the hour of our appointment for the Athenaeum."

John McVickar warned his friends in New York who had helped him start an athenaeum there not to mistake the London Athenaeum "for anything like ours—This is an aristocratic Club with royal Patronage & a princely mansion—who hold a conversazione at the present season every Wednesday Evng. at wh. you meet the noble & literary & the fashionable—in the most splendid Saloon such as yet I have seen." Because of the "hourly expectation" of the king's death the attendance was meager. The McVickars entered under the "attentive" escort of John Bowring and were first introduced to the author of *Lalla Rookh*. McVickar always associated Thomas Moore with his metrical translation of *Anacreon,* for which he was known when he stopped in New York on his return home from Bermuda in 1804. He was now bringing out a *Life of Bryon,* with whom he had been intimate on the continent.

McVickar noted, "Soon after Lord Nugent (Brother of the d. of Buckingham) passing us—Anna & I immediately recognized him from the caricature of him we have at home—on mentioning this to our conductor he immediately addrest him with the information of his widespread reputation—this led to an introduction—& an agreeable conversation." As an M.P. whose knowledge of finance was esteemed, the Irish baron had been a recent visitor to the Political Economy Club and was interested in meeting an American professor of the subject.

The professor's desire to investigate the educational development of the country led him the next day to attend "an Examination of a portion of the National Schools at Islington," where he dined with the Rector, Daniel Wilson, soon to be nominated bishop of Calcutta. He came away early to attend a meeting of the Royal Antiquarian Society, followed by a still more interesting meeting of the Royal Society. He was impressed by the "great dignity & formality in all their proceedings." After the meeting they adjourned to the library to tea. Professor McVickar related that "about 11 I accompanied the Pres—Davies Gilbert Esq & Mr. Gurney, both members of Parliament, in the chariot of the latter to the House of Commons—when I was again introduced by privilege—& by privilege took a nap before I left it at 2 in the Morng."

From what McVickar observed "of the ministry—most of them are very infirm, with the exception of Peel. The Duke of Wellington is their only strength & the approaching end of the King makes them tremble through all their members." Finally he noted, "I walked home wh. was a little indiscreet & Friday Morng I slept till 9."

The annual fete which Sir Robert and Lady Inglis gave to the children of their tenantry and neighborhood had been postponed because of inclement weather, but now under the guidance of Mrs. Heber the McVickars drove out through Clapham to the "noble country mansion" at Battersea Rise. There they were cordially welcomed and witnessed a typical English picnic for one hundred and eighty children, who sang in chorus *God Save the King* and were fed gooseberry pies, plum cakes, and fruit. "It was a lovely picture," they all agreed, "the little gentry waited on the little rustics—& it would have been hard to say wh. enjoyed it the most—the waiters or the feasters." In the meantime, what McVickar termed "our indoors company" assembled and were served a noble breakfast "or noonday meal." This together with the library, the lawn, the children, and their sports "occupied us till near 6 o'clock."

Among the guests on this occasion the professor and his ladies again met the Aclands, with whom they had promised to breakfast the following week. As a member of Parliament for Devon, Thomas Dyke Acland was supporting Wellington on the question of Catholic emancipation and was apparently counted "head of the religious party in the House of Commons." There was also Sir James Mackintosh, to whom was then being attributed the *History of England* in Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopedia*. Professor McVickar was more interested, however, in his current dissertation on the *Progress of Ethical Philosophy*. He seemed to the professor the ablest among the political men he had met with in London. In discussing political and economic changes on the English scene, McVickar noted "his conversation strongly marked & not a little Johnsonian."

Among the company was "Mr. Wilberforce, full of kindness & warm-hearted enthusiasm," who insisted on the American professor giving him a day the week following at his seat, Highwood Hill, about ten miles from London. It was at this residence that Wilberforce became a leader of the Clapham Sect of evangelists and planned the publication of *The Christian Observer*. Although McVickar knew that William Wilberforce could not be much more than seventy, he seemed at first sight much older. But as McVickar observed, "his appearance is that of deformity rather than decrepitude and would be painful in the extreme were it not redeemed by a cheerful expression of manner and voice; but his mind is full of activity and intelligence." Wilberforce told his guest that he entered Parliament in 1780 when he was intimate with Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and others. He spoke of his first step towards the prohibition of slave trade twenty-seven years later with the passing of the Bill for Abolition. Now he was working for an eventual emancipation bill and was eager to learn what progress was being made toward the freeing of slaves in America.

CHAPTER 2

Government and the English Mind

With Whig and Tory in the House . . . Oxford and the Political Economy Club

To the British, the visiting professor presented something new and challenging. McVickar was one of the first men of mature caliber they had met who had been born and bred a citizen of a nation which spoke their language, observed many of their customs, but which was nevertheless now a "foreign" nation. His practical, outspoken manner suggested qualities that might perhaps be characteristic of this people across the Atlantic: qualities to command attention, to be taken into account in their dealings with America. In matters of art and churchmanship, as well as of finance and economics, they found his approach fresh and stimulating.

On their way home from Battersea Rise, the McVickars stopped at the House of Commons, where the professor deposited the ladies "in their observatory" while he himself made application and was again admitted "under the gallery."[1] The discussion, as he described it, "was an animated one & touched much upon American Affairs or rather American Finance. In the course of it I was so struck with the erroneous statement of fact by one of the Members, Richard Graham, & want of just comprehension of things with us that I had an immediate communication with Mr. Herries—the only one of the Ministry with whom I had any acquaintance—He seemed to set a value on the information I gave him—returned once or twice to make inquireies & begged me to pay him a visit at 11 o'clock—unfortunately I dished myself (so to say) in his good opinion by acknowledging Mr. Hume as my Introducer to the House." Chancellor of the Exchequer John Charles Herries soon found that the American professor's nonpartisan approach to economics was not to be discounted by his having been introduced by the Radical leader.

It was now the end of the second week and the McVickars determined to spend Saturday in the City. On the way they stopped at "Achermans Repository for an hour's admiring & purchasing." Rudolph Achermann had established art lithography in England and his illustrated books had fascinated McVickar. The visit to the print shop in the Strand, however, made Prof Mac late for his appointment with Herries, who had left for a meeting of the Privy Council in Downing Street.

Nevertheless, they drove on to St. Paul's, where the professor left the ladies in the cathedral and went to pay "my promised visit to Dr. Copleston the rich Dean of St. Paul's (£6,000) & the poor Bp of London (£1,000)." McVickar knew that Edward Copleston's *Letters to the Rt. Hon. Robert Peel on the pernicious effects of a Variable Standard of Value etc.* had done much in the past decade to call attention to the imperfect adaptation of wages and prices to currency depreciation. He was pleased therefore to be greeted by the dean as a fellow student of economics as well as a sympathetic churchman of Anglo-Catholic persuasion. McVickar came away with "a note to Lord Grosvenor to obtain cards for his gallery" and with a feeling that his visit had been to "a gentleman & a scholar & therefore agreeable."

From the cathedral they drove to India House, where John McVickar's "friend," Thomas Horsefield, was keeper of the museum of the East India Company. Horsefield had taken his M.D. at the University of Pennsylvania and had gone to Java, where he had rendered a valuable report on the East Indies. At India House McVickar also counted on finding "Mr. Mill (the writer on India etc.)" and his son John Stuart Mill. There was time left in the day only to pay a short visit to the Tower and return to dress for dinner.

It was a dinner given by Joseph Hume to have certain of the financial experts of his party meet the economics professor from America. As McVickar recorded it, "Our party was a small but pleasant one—Richard Ray, Mr. Denman the great lawyer & still known as the Queen's Solicitor in her trial, Sir Henry Parnell & Mr. Maberly the two latter leading members of the opposition." Frederick Herbert Maberly was so much an oppositionist that he was at one time ejected from the House as a lunatic, but Parnell was considered by McVickar as "One of the ablest of their writers on Finance, Currency, etc, and Mr. Hume himself one of the clearest headed men I have met with—& the most commonsense speakers I have yet heard." However, speaking of their great men McVickar observed, "There is but one has impressed me with the idea of superiority & that is Sir James Macintosh."

From this dinner the professor and his wife went on to a late party at Lady Newton's. Here McVickar said, "I had scarcely entered when Capt Franklin now Sir John," for the explorer had just been knighted for adding one thousand and two hundred miles to the coastline of the American continent, "came up to me and in the kindest manner welcomed me to England, reproached me with not letting him know at once of our arrival and introduced me to Lady Franklin." Franklin had visited the professor at Columbia five years ago on his way to the Arctic sea via Lake Huron. His first wife, McVickar was told, had died urging him to go on with his explorations. The present Lady Franklin, to whom he had been married two years, was the one whose heroic efforts were to reveal the facts which would establish Sir John as the discoverer of the Northwest Passage. McVickar found her "a most lovely woman, and we had a long pleasant talk about her husband's travels etc."

The following morning at half past nine Prof Mac took his family to Westminster Abbey, where in later years was to be carved a recognition of the nation's indebtedness to the Arctic explorer and to Lady Franklin. Once in the Abbey as friends of the dean, they were "ushered thro' grated doors to the great *Stall* (as it is called) & directed to ascend." Soon they found themselves "installed in State with the Lady Mayoress at our side & the Lord Mayor at our feet—The ceremonial & the dresses of the procession were splendid—the Mayor, Sheriffs, Judges etc all arranged immediately below us—each with a large bouquet of flowers in his right hand wh. during Service was carefully deposited on the crimson cushion of his Stall." St. Paul's Cathedral seemed to the

McVickars "human & worldly" compared with the "impressions of awe" they received at Westminster. In the Abbey with its "long drawn aisles & fretted vaults," the professor felt "there was something out of this world." To continue his study of London's ecclesiastical architecture, McVickar drove to what he considered "the most beautiful modern specimin of the Gothic wh. Eng. presents in the Queen's (or rather St. Margaret's) Chapel Regent's Park. This is truly beautiful—perfect in all its proportions, orderings & accompaniaments—enriched with carving, armorial bearings, stained glass etc." Then recalling the many architectural plans he had drawn, beginning with the little church at Hyde Park on the Hudson, the professor declared, "The more I see the more I am confirmed in my preference of the Gothic architecture for religious uses & am pleased that I have laboured to introduce it" into America.

On their return "from our long church" they found the Franklins "had been to see us, and soon after got a pressing invitation for Saturday next." The Franklins' continued hospitality drew the exclamation from Prof Mac, "They seem truly kind."

Another renewal of friendship was McVickar's visit the next morning "to Lord Lyndhurst's to see his mother, Mrs. Copley, Mrs. Startin's sister, at whose house I was intimate twenty-five years ago," when the English historical painter had inspired his young visitor with a lifelong interest in creative art. At that time John Singleton Copley's American-born son, whose "sweet loving temper" inclined him toward holy orders, had just been called to the bar. As chancellor, his voice, next to that of Wellington and Robert Peel, was now the most powerful in the British Cabinet.

"After the Lord Chancellor's my next," as McVickar noted it, "was to Sir H. Parnell." He found Henry Brooke Parnell, who had actively supported the act for Catholic emancipation, "up to his ears in papers, being full of Parliamentary business." His interest in Irish affairs as well as his high reputation as one of the founders of the Political Economy Club made for common bonds with the American professor. He read McVickar a note from Thomas Tooke, another founder of the Club, "begging him to engage me at their great politico-economical dinner next week."

"Leaving this," McVickar wrote of the same Monday, "I drove to Lord Stowell's, whom I had also known well twenty-five years ago," for Sir William Scott, as he was then, had been judge of the High Court of Admiralty and had been of help in introducing McVickar as a student at Oxford University. The judgments of Stowell were to remain for more than a century "the international law of England" and in time were to become the presumptive evidence for the international law of America.

When John McVickar's card was sent up, mentioning his being from America, Lord Stowell immediately received him "with great friendliness and recalled with wonderful accuracy the circumstances of our earlier acquaintance." He desired to be remembered to John Jay's family in New York and to Chancellor Kent, "who had sent him his book." McVickar noted that Stowell's health was "much broken, so that he lives altogether retired from company and seldom quits the house, which he regretted, he said, on my account but proffered every kindness and promised, if admissible, to get our ladies admitted behind the throne in the House of Lords, a privilege now less easily accorded in consequence of some indiscretion, I think, of Lady Holland's." (McVickar had been invited to one of Lady Holland's salons at Holland House—fashioned for her Whig circle after the eighteenth-century Parisian model—without being much impressed.)

Lord Stowell asked what changes he saw in England.

"An equal increase of wealth and democracy," was the political economist's reply.

"Ah, too true," came the rejoinder, "you find us in a bad way."

It was to McVickar "a great gratification to have had this friendly conversation with him," especially since Stowell spoke "warmly of America as a friend, and benevolently and kindly on all subjects. He is the great lawyer of the age," McVickar reflected, "and is leaving behind none equal to him on the great questions of belligerent and mutual rights and in general of international law." Later he sent the jurist "at his request Mr. Webster's great speech."

One of John McVickar's purposes in going to England was to investigate first hand the University of London so much referred to by supporters of the new university movement in New York. He discovered that the title of "London University" had been carried for the past three years by the nonsectarian foundation of University College, in the hope of obtaining a charter. However, in connection with the movement, the Church of England had secured a charter for its foundation of King's College the previous year, and although there was as yet no degree-giving institution officially designated as London University, McVickar could write the senior trustee of the former King's College in New York, "The question of a London University is settled."

To this he added, "It is a failure, I may say, a complete one. The gentlemen of the council, whom I first met with, endeavored to avoid this acknowledgement—but in breakfasting this morning with Dr. Holland, one of their leading members, he told me frankly that they were bankrupt in money, quarreling among themselves, the best professors resigning & comparatively without students." This confirmed the talk McVickar had had at the Athenaeum with Mr. Weymouth, one of the "Committee of Gov." of London's University College who, he noted, "opened to me the real state of that full blown bubble." McVickar compared it with Columbia's Grammar School and estimated that in London "the Academic department does not number more students than our College School & I doubt whether better—the Medical School alone is flourishing & a Law School may grow up—but this is all." He advised Bishop Hobart that there were some publications out upon this subject "which if I find of interest I will send you." [2]

There were other experiences of value to friends in America such as "an appointment to take me to view the greatest printing establishment in London & consequently in the world." They crossed the Thames "in mud & rain" to Southwark where McVickar saw "780 men always at work in one long room." He was told they had "100 ton of Stereotype plates arranged valued at £350,000—Its presses are worked by steam—2 boys doing the work of 8 men—(rollers for inking made of molasses & glue water cast in forms on wooden rollers)." By this means it was said they could print on one side four thousand impressions per hour.

At the press he met a son of the Duke of Clarence, Colonel Fitz-clarence, who gave him a ticket to the Royal Asiatic Society.

To this he went immediately with his brother-in-law, Henry Cruger, and inspected "its splendid & varied collection without a guide." There he learned "our old friend Sabine has lost standing as a scientific man—he resigned his Secretaryship last Thursday at the Royal Socy." Sir Edward Sabine, who had first visited New York in 1823, was an authority on astronomy, terrestrial magnetism, and ornithology. He had recently been attacked, however, by the mathematician Charles Babbage and was being recalled to military service.

McVickar knew that the members of his Club in New York would be interested in the operation of London clubs. He was now, as a guest, familiar with the interiors of "the United Service & Union Club Houses," and reported them as "splendid establishments with incomes of 10 to £12,000." "Such clubhouses in London," he noted, "are not idle gambling houses as they generally become with us but valuable aids to single men—& those of narrow fortunes—a man is enabled by them to keep the best Socy. & live genteely & comfortably for a mere trifle—4 Shil. a day will pay his living & give him good company—while in some cheaper part of town he has his bed room for 7 or 8 Shil. a week."

As the McVickars went about, each social contact seemed to offer a new suggestion to bring home to their life in New York. The professor was impressed with the fact that there was "less time loitered away here than with us." On one occasion he was able to say, "I practiced my French with a Greek Knight Count Valimachi to whom Mrs. Heber introduced me." At a fashionable party he noted "they dance on the carpet with a professional player at the piano." At Lady Buller's, where they found "the room was heavy with the paintings of her daughter," Anna McVickar accepted an invitation "to pass a morng. with her at her easel."

The fact that there were few, if any, examples of great paintings or sculpture in America lent added importance for the McVickars to the galleries and private collections they were now seeing. McVickar knew he would be questioned by friends like Samuel Morse and others who were doing important art work in New York. It was with this in mind he accepted the invitation of Francis Legatt Chantrey to visit his studio in Pimlico. The sculptor was not knighted as yet, but he was a Royal Academician of rising fame whose statues of Washington were to adorn the State House in Boston. Especially McVickar was attracted by Chantrey's bust of Horne Tooke, the clergyman who just a year before the signing of the Declaration of Independence had been committed to prison for signing an advertisement in England soliciting subscriptions for relief of relatives of Americans "murdered by the King's troops at Lexington and Concord."

Chantrey's works seemed to McVickar to "have genius and truth in them; no personifications, no allegories;" as he expressed it to Chantrey, "no Fauns blowing trumpets etc."

"Ah," said the sculptor who had started as a grocer's boy in Sheffield, "I leave that to greater geniuses."

McVickar was impressed also because "Chantrey's casting in brass" was on such a great scale. "I never was more struck with the progressive steps of art," he observed as he watched "the men at work putting together a gigantic figure of the poor, dying king." George IV, who had paid Chantrey £300 for doing his bust, owned "three splendid pieces of Canova's" which McVickar saw in this studio. He admired the grace of the late Italian sculptor Antonio Canova, which he felt "at once cast all around into the shade." This interest in sculpture led to McVickar's bringing to America the Houdon bust of Benjamin Franklin which his nephew, John Bard, years later presented to the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

McVickar renewed the acquaintance of a correspondent of some years past. It was shortly after the appearance of Francis Leveson-Gower's translation of Goethe's *Faust* that McVickar had sent him a "singularly beautiful poem" which, he wrote the professor at the time, he was "not able to resist making an attempt to translate, but I have never seen," he added, "a German poem which presented more difficulties." Now Leveson-Gower, knowing McVickar's interest in art, suggested he visit the gallery at Bridgewater House, where he had added certain works of art to the collection of pictures inherited from his great uncle, the duke of Bridgewater.[3]

Later Sir Thomas Acland sent McVickar an admission to the

Stafford Gallery "for yourself & your family from Lord Francis Leveson Gower" for the annual day of opening the gallery. His lordship desired him to assure professor McVickar "that if you cannot avail yourself of that opportunity in the perfect convenience of yourself he begs you will call tomorrow without scruple and you will find orders left for your admission." Acland advised that "perhaps it would be well in that case not to be too early—between 3 & 5 o'clock—the family are less likely to be in your way." [4] The professor found the paintings "more interesting then those of Lord Grosvenor—& the rooms still more so since with all their splendor they have a comfortable home air in all their arrangements wh. the other wanted."

* * *

Professor McVickar was quick to perceive that he was at the center of a fast changing world and he was equipped by nature and training to meet the minds of those who were effecting that change. He found himself participating in heated discussions of the Irish problem, Catholic emancipation, and the abolition of slavery. All around he saw the signs of farreaching economic, social, and political changes attending the development of the industrial revolution. At every point his observations emphasized the relevance and value of the new science of political economy to an understanding of what was happening. Though an American, a foreigner, he had a contribution to make and it was welcomed.

"Bustle, bustle," McVickar complained, as visitors from the quiet little town of New York were wont to do, "nothing but bustle in London." [5] Nevertheless, following Daniel Webster's advice, he was persistent in contacting government men who might add to his knowledge of political economy. For this reason, on June 15 he "took Cab (cabriolet) or kind of gig & set off" to find William Wilberforce and discuss with him the method of abolishing slavery through legislation. He found the emancipator "laid up with a fall wh. had hurt his leg." After dinner that evening he set off again "for the House of Lords for wh. I had an order from Lord Harrowby." Dudley Ryder, first earl of Harrowby, who had refused the prime ministership three years ago, McVickar was told, was "out to dinner with the rest of that House." He therefore turned to the House of Commons and sent in his card to Sir Robert Inglis.

On being admitted to his now usual place "under the gallery," McVickar found "the discussion was Sierra Leone & the policy of retaining or abandoning it." This country was bounded on the south by a territory selected in 1821 by the American Colonization Society for the first detachment of their freed Negroes, and was therefore a section of west-coast Africa about which McVickar was well informed. His entrance had been noted by Joseph Hume, and the professor's journal recorded, "I was able fortunately—on his calling on me—to give him some important information on the Subject of our colony at Liberia. On this question we had on the floor Mr. Hume; Buxton [Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Wilberforce's successor who in the course of the following year was to introduce the resolution abolishing slavery]; Robinson [probably the Privy Councillor Sir Christopher Robinson]; Huskisson [William Huskisson, the Colonial office statesman largely responsible for Wellington's coming into power. He was awkward both in appearance and in speaking, but McVickar commented on his 'large fine intellectual head.' Three months later at the opening of the Manchester-Liverpool Railway Huskisson was killed by falling on the tracks.]; Watley; Sir G Murray [Sir George was secretary for the Colonies]; etc. etc." This led to McVickar having "some talk with Mr. Herries—who thanked me for the papers [among which was one of the speeches Webster had given McVickar] & said that if the House adjourned early [the professor's journal noted this was one o'clock in the House] he would take a couple of hours to read them."

The professor did not wait for the adjournment but "returned to tea at midnight & found a very kind note from Lord Stowell enclosing an order from Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt," the classical commentator, whose brother had been one of the founders of the Unitarian Society. This was an order admitting the McVickar ladies "behind the throne in the House of Lords."

The next morning they were up in time for a delightful breakfast party at the Aclands. McVickar spoke of them as descendants of the Acclams "who came in with the Conqueror—very wealthy & hospitable." The Rt. Hon. Wilmot Horton, member for Newcastle-under-Lyme, whom the professor was to have met there, sent him an apology but "with a particular request to see me as soon as convenient after breakfast." When McVickar called he found Robert John Wilmot Horton meeting in committee with the Colonization Society, of which he was president. This was an organization, the professor observed, "into whose views and weaknesses I was soon initiated by being requested to take part in their deliberations."

As the discussion proceeded it seemed to the professor that they were "disjointed & at utter variance among themselves,—& each party looking to new settlements in the United States for proofs & to my testimony of the facts as likely to be in their favor." The views he gave, however, seemed to agree only with Horton's who, McVickar felt, "stood alone, clear & intelligent among visionary or interested men." His journal recorded it as "an amusing scene." At the conclusion of the meeting Wilmot Horton and he planned to meet again. The following day the professor received "a long communication from him containing queries, etc." which he answered "tho' in a great hurry." The politician, who in another year was to be knighted and sent to Ceylon as governor, had an added interest for McVickar because it was he who had acted as Lady Leigh's representative in the destruction of Byron's *Memoirs.*

The Royal Commission for the first time was to appear in the House of Lords, and to this the McVickars went, "the name & introduction of Lord Stowell securing for us peculiar respect—& in the House & Library," Prof Mac went on to note, "we passed 2 or 3 Hours attended by an old college pupil Mr. Winslow (3 years ago a student in the new world)—now Secy to a Chancellor in the old."

It was another busy day when "Mr. Senior the Oxford Prof came in early introducing himself in a manner as kind as it was unceremonious—scribbled off some letters for Oxford & engaged me to dine with him." In the afternoon McVickar spent an hour with the chancellor, "who sent for me as he was seated on the Wool

Sack," and that evening he dined with the banker Joshua Bates. There he met Louis McLane and certain other American friends. "Mr. A. Baring's son-in-law (Mr. Poulett Thomson—a leading opposition member of the House)," was of particular interest to the professor. Thomson had been assisted to his seat in the House by Jeremy Bentham where he was introducing bills of financial reform. In later years he was to go to Canada where as governor general he was responsible for a new constitution leading to the union of the provinces. In time he became Lord Sydenham of Toronto, but for the present he interested John McVickar as being a member of the Political Economy Club.

Because William Nassau Senior was not only a member of the Political Economy Club but chief advisor to the Whig party, McVickar was anxious to follow up his offer of hospitality. Accordingly he drove out to Kensington "to keep my dinner appointment with Prof Senior." There he recorded having found "a large & agreeable party—but the host himself absent having been hurried away by news from Chatham of his Brother being engaged or in danger of a duel—His house and dinner I found in the first style of fashion & luxury—His Oxford Profp. I am now told was a matter incedental (his Profession being law)—and now expired by its own limitation of five years." At this dinner Prof Mac said, "I had to make my own way (I was a stranger to Mrs. S) & the company being new to me & I to them." But by the time dinner was over he felt "among friends & received many warm invitations." Finally when "a Gent. of the name of Lane pressed me to a seat in his chariot," McVickar accepted in order to keep an engagement "at Lady Buller's at ½ past 11" to meet the treasurer of the Navy, Sir Thomas Frankland Lewis, who had succeeded Herries in that office.

The journal finally recorded, "this day (Saturday) as our last in London has been our busiest—much to pack—many visits to pay—& bills still more numerous." Nevertheless the professor set off in search of information relative to Liberia "for a Parliamentary friend." Fortunately he lighted on what he wanted with "10,000 chances against me (only one copy I believe in London)." He then made "a farewell visit" to Alexander Baring (the future

Lord Ashburton), where he met "the great Banker Attwood who introduced the Currency Bill a few nights ago in the House." Thomas Attwood was just organizing the Birmingham Political Union for Protection of Public Rights, which was to support Grey and the Reform bill. McVickar continued the rounds calling on the then chancellor of the Exchequer and others who were to prove lifelong associates. Only after "a hasty dinner" were the professor and Eliza Bard and their daughters, Anna and Mary, able to break away from the hospitalities of London "having entered it as strangers 3 weeks ago & now leaving it as if it were a second home."

The next day found them in Windsor, and as it was Sunday they attended service in the Royal Chapel. One of McVickar's parliamentary friends, Sir Stratford Canning, had given him an introduction to the vicar, his brother, who accorded them special courtesies. Thus they were shown through the king's apartments "& approached the partition wh. separated us from his dying bed." For the afternoon service they drove to the Eton College Chapel and inspected the school. They visited "Winkfield the residence of Mr. DeRham's brother," and drove through the estate of William, Earl Harcourt, who had "died suddenly two days ago." (McVickar noted him as the officer commanding the sixteenth Light Dragoons in America, who had captured General Charles Lee in 1776.) Finally they arrived in the Great Park of Windsor "with its splendid double avenue of Elm 3 miles in length."

Their next stop was the village of Taplow, where "the gate and hand" of the poet-entomologist Charles Smith Bird "stood ready open to receive us." The course of a morning's drive took them to *Dropmore* where they saw "its paralytic Lord, William Wyndham Grenville, "pushed about by footmen in a garden chair." They spent a night at Henley upon Thames where they had intended "a row on the river but the morng. was too cold." From there "two posts" brought them over the remaining twenty-three miles to Oxford, "the city of Palaces." Here they stopped at the Angel, Prof Mac noting that it was the same inn "at wh. I staid with my Father 25 years ago." The new arrivals were told that the city now had "16,000 inhabitants with its university comprising twenty colleges and five halls."

Among the letters McVickar found awaiting his arrival at the Angel was one from Sir Thomas Acland's undergraduate son, saying, "It will give me great pleasure to be of any service to you in my power." McVickar met "young Acland" as he was going about delivering his letters of introduction. He described him as "a fine specimen of the best class of English youth—open, warm hearted—with good sense, Religious principles & high academic reputation." In his lodgings opposite Tom-Gate the Columbia professor was interested in meeting some of Acland's fellow undergraduates at Christ Church, among whom was William Ewart Gladstone, then enthusiastically engaged in teaching Sunday school.

While waiting for a response to their letters, the McVickars drove "9 miles" out to call on the vicar of Oddington. There they found their "new old friends (as I may call them) established in a beautiful tho' somewhat too new to be romantic Cottage Parsonage, surrounded with comforts within & with beauties without." In the course of passing "a very agreeable day with my intelligent friends," McVickar made notes on the status of this parish, which he learned was "a College gift—contains but 160 souls—worth £600 pr. an.—tithes accounted for 1200 bushels wheat at maximum price—Great demand on the poor rates—a man & his wife cannot live under 10 or 20 Shils. a week—the main food of the land is wheatenbread—some butter & bacon—wages in harvest, women/10, men 2/ a day." Details such as these were noted for future consideration when there would be time to ponder their general economic significance.

The next day the journal recorded that Professor McVickar "breakfasted with Dr. Whately, Principal of St. Albans Hall, successor to Mr. Senior as Prof. of Polit. Econy." He found Richard Whately, who was just his own age, a tall, strong, well-proportioned man, keen on fishing. The young priest he had taken on as vice-principal to assist him while bringing out his publications (the latest of these being entitled, *Errors of Romanism*) was John Henry Newman, now vicar of St. Mary's in Oxford. From what

McVickar could see, Whately and Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth, the warden of New College, "may be termed the Religious Leaders of the university," the former soon to become archbishop of Dublin, the latter bishop of Chichester.

In the Sheldonian Theatre at eleven that morning of June 23, McVickar "heard the Prize Essays, Poems etc." which he estimated "not much better than at home either in manner or matter." He witnessed "the degrees of LLD. conferred in State on Generals & Admirals who in Academic robes listened & replied to Latin Speeches with all becoming gravity." Charles Fellows, who had been knighted for his success against Turks and privateers in the Mediterranean, was among them. McVickar pictured it as "quite a Saturnalia among the Students—Plaudits, groans & hisses shewed a little more democracy than I expected—but it always has been so." It was doubtless with a certain nostalgic feeling for his own undergraduate days here that Prof Mac wrote down, "this University pleases me much." However, he proceeded to record as his "present observation" a detailed analysis of the Oxford University system of education. He finally concluded that "the operation of the whole system is years more Study than with us & greater attainments—& almost a more manly spirit & more gentlemanly deportment."

He went on to dine with the cheery, humorous, bustling William Buckland, "(Prof of Minereology & Geology)—one of the cleverest & ablest men in Oxford." Buckland described a recent discovery in Lyme Regis which he had named "Pterodactylus macronyx" and produced specimens from his famous blue bag. McVickar was impressed with the luxury of his college rooms, "a picture of his studies—a hyena salutes you at the door—& antidiluvian monsters meet you at every turn on the stairs & you recognize some memento of the world before the flood. He is himself the great lion of Oxford. He has a playful, delightful manner wh. charms every one." While McVickar was there they had "always company." Among these was William John Burchell, the explorer-naturalist who declared at that time he had "15,000 species of plants, all gathered by myself," and Davies Gilbert "(my old acquaintance) Pres of the Royal Socy. etc. etc."

McVickar went on to note that "after dinner (10 oclock) I joined the ladies at Mr. Mills of Magdalen College (Prof Moral Phil)—where we met much good Socy." Not only was this the college of Nassau Senior who had given McVickar introductions, but also Bishop Hobart had commended him to Martin Joseph Routh, then president of Magdalen. McVickar had often heard that in 1783, when Samuel Seabury was in England vainly seeking the episcopate for America, Routh had met him through their mutual friend Myles Cooper, the last colonial president of the now Columbia College. Routh then persuaded Seabury to petition the nonjuror bishops in Scotland for consecration. He was now seventy-five years old and working on the fifth volume of his *Reliquae Sacrae*.

The next morning, being satisfied "the ladies were attended by their Beaux to whose care I left them," McVickar looked into the examination "Schools again & at ½ past 11 mounted the London coach." This took him without fatigue "by a drive or rather flight" over a distance of "55 miles" in seven hours. With all that, McVickar found himself "rather after my hour" and therefore he took a cab and "drove immediately to the Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen street—where the Politico Econc. Club held their meetings & their dinners."

The hall in which the Political Economy Club of London was holding its dinner was part of a coffee tavern in the same Wild Court where Benjamin Franklin had once served as a journeyman printer. Here the United Grand Lodge of Masons had long had their headquarters, and here also for twenty-one years a celebrated Whig society known as the "King of Clubs" drew together such men as the banker-poet Samuel Rogers, Sir James Mackintosh, Sydney Smith, Henry Brougham, Henry Hallam, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, and Francis Jeffrey. It was scarcely two years after their last meeting that Malthus, Ricardo, and other kindred spirits were persuaded by Thomas Tooke to meet together in the same tavern for the purpose of supporting the ideal of free trade as set forth in his London Merchants' Petition of 1820. Thus it was the Political Economy Club began holding its "7 dinners annually" in April 1821 and had continued with a select membership to exercise considerable influence in the affairs of the nation.

McVickar had arrived from overseas just too late for the club's "last regular meeting" of that year, but "at the desire of many members it was determined to have an extra meeting on Thursday, 24th June," it would seem with the express purpose of receiving the first American professor of political economy. It was an occasion of such significance that the American minister saw fit to accompany him as a guest, as also did both the deputy governor of the Bank of England, John Horsley Palmer, whom McVickar had known as a leading authority on currency and finance, and Henry Drummond. Drummond was McVickar's age but he had early come in touch with the economists in Geneva and in 1825 founded the professorship of political economy at Oxford. This singular mixture of all things "saint—wit—philosopher," as Carlyle described him, McVickar found to be an enthusiastic follower of his friend Edward Irving, referring to the latter as "an eminent leader."

According to the rules of the London Political Economy Club, it took four members "to introduce a stranger," but as far as John McVickar knew he was being "introduced by Sir H. Parnell—tho' Lord Althorp (whom I had never seen) appeared as my voucher." Thus "after the cloth was removed" from the banquet table McVickar was announced to the club by the secretary as "The Rev. Mr. Mac Vickar, Prof. Pol Ec in Columbia College."[6]

The chairman of the meeting, George Lyall, spoke on the topic "Has the rate of Profit diminished since the peace; and if so, what are the causes of diminution?" Although McVickar understood Lyall had just been made a director of the East India Company, his manner seemed too diffident to be impressive. Nevertheless, his years of experience as chairman of the Shipowner's Society lent weight to his judgment. The second topic for discussion, "Did the circulation of the Small Notes of the Country Bankers promote useful industry?" was more in McVickar's line. This was expounded by the vice chairman, Walter Coulson, a lawyer who had been Bentham's amanuensis and served the *Morning Chronicle* as editor. At Charles Lamb's evening parties he had made many literary friends, and was godfather to Hazlitt's eldest child. Crabb

Robinson considered him "a prodigy of knowledge." John McVickar was not impressed, however, with his dissertation on banking.

There followed "much discussion on the subjects previously noticed" of which McVickar commented "some able—more stuff—the whole I think of little value." It was the members and guests present who engaged his attention more, and with them he observed, "I quickly found myself thro' interest of a common subject quite at home." Moreover, his journal showed that he could "enumerate the company" later with extraordinary accuracy. It seemed a remarkable attendance, for with the exception of Malthus, James Mill, the Radical M.P. Henry Warburton, and Alexander Baring's son, the entire membership was present. Of the original members there were John Cazenove; George Gerard DeHochspied Larpent, an M.P. later created baronet for services in connection with China and the Orient; George Lyall, M.P.; John Lewis Mallet, son of the refugee publicist Mallet du Pan and father of the economist Sir Louis Mallet; George Warde Norman, director of the Bank of England and writer on finance; Sir Henry Brooke Parnell, author and M.P., soon to be secretary of war in Grey's administration and finally to be created Baron Congleton; Thomas Tooke, in whose memory a chair of economic science and statistics was to be founded at King's College, London; and also dating his membership from that first year of 1821, Walter Coulson.

Those of more recent membership were the generally popular John Charles Althorp, soon to be known as Earl Spencer; Nassau William Senior, who after David Ricardo's death was ranked as England's leading economist; Moses Ricardo, noted by McVickar as "a brother of the late David R"; James Pennington, a consultant on currency and banking; Charles Edward Poulett Thomson, the financial reformer then vice president of the Board of Trade; John Ramsay McCulloch, certain of whose writings McVickar had reprinted as part of his own publications and who was then occupying the unendowed chair of political economy at London University; and McVickar's friend, Robert John Wilmot Horton, M.P. Before half past ten when the meeting "broke up," McVickar had the opportunity to meet all of these men and to exchange opinions with many of them. Finally he wrote, "Mr. McLane brought me home in his carriage to my old lodgings."

John McVickar hardly more than slept in his Regent Street rooms, for the next morning he kept a breakfast appointment with Nassau Senior "at the splendid Club House St. James's (the only one except the Travellers where strangers are admitted)." This was followed by another appointment with John Charles Herries who, McVickar noted, "next to Sir R. Peel & the Duke seems to me the ablest man in the present feeble ministry—he looked almost worn out—had not quitted the House (he told me) till 4 that Morng. & declared that another such month would kill him." From this conference McVickar hastened to the House of Commons, where he was "introduced by Sir H. Parnell to the Committee on the Irish Poor." Thomas Spring-Rice, soon to become a member of the Political Economy Club and to be known as Lord Monteagle, was the chairman. He gave McVickar a "card" from the regius professor of modern history at Cambridge, William Smyth, "(whom he had dined with Monday before at Lansdowne House)". Professor McVickar remembered Smyth at Peterhouse, where he had not only been a tutor of his brother, Archibald McVickar, but also of a son of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Nevertheless, Prof Mac's modesty prompted him to write home that it was "mistaking me for Arch. he had sent me a thousand kind messages."

McVickar as an Irish-American made his contribution to the committee meeting, and then John Ramsay McCulloch, with whom he had talked the night before at the Club, was called on. McVickar in his first publication on political economy had been unhesitating in correcting what he deemed certain errors in McCulloch's encyclopedia article. It amused him now when McCulloch was examined "touching his former evidence on the State of Ireland." In the course of questioning McCulloch "allowed he had modified his old opinion relative to the introduction of poor laws into that country." Then McVickar described how, "being ingeniously led on by the Chairman who thinks little of him or his testimony," McCulloch soon found himself involved "in a contradiction about the union of such a scheme with his acknowledged principles of absenteeism." In an attempt to justify himself he "boldly professed consistency with his old doctrine," but McVickar noticed "(he blushed however in doing it)".

McVickar took time off to pay his respects to Sir Thomas and Lady Acland.[7] Then back for "lunch at the Parliament House wh. I turned into a dinner among the big wigs—returned to the House of Lords—& heard a brisk attack on the Duke by Lords Grey & Lansdowne." After sleeping the night "at our old lodging," McVickar woke the following morning "half sick from real indisposition & wholly so from separation from my best nurse and friend." In this condition he lost no time in setting out to join Eliza and their daughters, Anna and Mary, who had gone directly from Oxford to Clifton.

CHAPTER 3

Hannah More and the Lake Poets

From Bristol to Liverpool . . . Wordsworth,
Southey, and Mrs. Hemans

ALTHOUGH the Church of England recognized the orders of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, American clergy were not yet permitted to officiate in English churches. McVickar was pleased to have an opportunity to compare American preaching with the preaching in England, both in the nonconformist and established congregations. On his trip up the west coast he carefully recorded the social and economic status of the English people, not only comparing it with contemporary conditions in America but also with his clear recollection of conditions in England in 1805.

John McVickar's journal for June 26, 1830, recorded, "I took a seat on the Bristol coach (started with the rising sun) at ¼ past 6—at 8 learned the news of the king's death." As they passed the massive walls of Windsor Castle, they saw "its flags half-mast & carried on the news westward—the horses full speed for 100 miles (at the rate of 15 miles the hour) saving the short stop on changing our four panting steeds for fresh ones always standing ready at the door brilliant with harness & high keeping & grooms at their heads." The change of horses "seldom took more than one minute & a few seconds." [1]

Seated on the box next to the driver so that he might better view the beauty of the rolling countryside, Prof Mac feared his "neck would have been broken—but such was the excellence of the roads, the coach & the driving that the motion was scarcely sensible." Always a fast driver himself, the professor enjoyed the experience, and finally at eight o'clock that evening the mail coach brought him safely to Clifton, the high-lying suburb on the far side of Bristol. Here on the Avon, where Sebastian Cabot was born and from whence he had sailed to charter maps for a new world, McVickar was greeted by his anxiously waiting wife and daughters.

The next day being Sunday the McVickars attended the parish church at Clifton, which had recently been built by the vicar, John Hensman. McVickar described him as "an amiable priest & zealous Clergyman." In the afternoon they went into Bristol "to hear the celebrated Robert Hall." The sixty-year-old Baptist divine, after an effective career as a preacher (interrupted by two periods of insanity), had now returned to the city of his original schooling. He was a friend and classmate of Sir James Mackintosh, and McVickar came away feeling Hall was "not unlike him in talent." Prof Mac decided he would "rather listen to him than Chalmers," because the Baptist preacher had "less of splendor but more repose of manner (like a consciousness of power)." Although Robert Hall was "too rapid in delivery and a little too monotonous," yet on the whole it seemed to McVickar he had "never heard such a calm full stream of thought and language in which there was nothing to alter, either in sentiment or expression." After service McVickar enjoyed a visit with him "in his retiring room—smoking etc."

They did not leave without paying their respects to Hannah More who had returned to Clifton to spend the last five years of her long life. They found she could still talk in the bright and witty manner with which she once delighted the circle of Samuel Johnson and Joshua Reynolds. As long ago as 1777, her tragedy, *Percy,* had been produced by David Garrick. McVickar now learned that after Garrick's death she had come to think of playgoing as wrong. Her interest had turned to instituting Sunday schools in the neglected areas of Cheddar and writing inexpensive tracts for propaganda purposes.

After taking leave of their hosts, the McVickars in a hired barouche rumbled through Bristol, a city then rivaling London as a port. Its crowded streets impressed the professor with the immediate need of applying the theories of the political economy he was studying. Nor was he surprised to hear in the course of the following year that the city had nearly been destroyed by fire as a result of the Reform Bill riot.

On the road to the Severn the professor could see, in the walls supporting the banks of earth, holes here and there for the water to pass, and noted "the neglect of this with us causes them to bulge out & give way in a few years." At the "old passage" where they crossed the river, he was surprised to see it "in width like the Hudson—but in colour like a mud tunnel yellow even thick with clay." He noted the "dangerous speed" of the current caused by the high tides "the highest it is said in the world unless it be equalled as I believe it is in some parts of the Bay of Fundy." The drive on to Chepstow on the Wye was of interest to the professor not for its romantic beauty alone but for "its new river bridges." At Tintern they sketched the ruined abbey. At Hereford they stopped for the cathedral, and Prof Mac was fascinated with "its library of chained books & saw the oldest map perhaps in existence." The plan was to spend the night at Ludlow, but they found "no beds there for love or money on a/c of the races." It compelled them to continue on the road until midnight "with no little risk of being robbed." At last they reached a comfortable inn overlooking the winding Dee.

It was noon before they were able to set out on the fourteen-mile drive to Shrewsbury. They found the city "dressed out in its holiday garb—the bells ringing a merry peal while the ceremony of proclaiming the new King (Wil IV) took place." Here were historic sights to be seen, and a "box of the far famed cakes" to be eaten. Also, because of McVickar's interest in Columbia's grammar school, he was anxious to visit the ancient Shrewsbury Grammar School where Samuel Butler, later bishop of Lichfield, was headmaster.

The vale of Llangellen, where two celebrated virgins dressed in semi-masculine attire had lived in seclusion for the past fifty years, could not be avoided. One of these "ladies of the vale" (Lady Butler) had died during the past year, and there was much talk of their early assertion of feminist principles. Accordingly, McVickar made a minute inquiry in the cottages around as to the character of Sarah Ponsonby and her companion, to discover the result of their experiment in seeking in retirement what the world could not give. He found that though strongly marked by eccentricity their life had long been one of active benevolence.

In spite of the weather, which Prof Mac observed "in America we should call *rainy*—but in this climate they give it the gentler appellation of *doubtful*," they drove on from Llangellen, following the banks of the Dee, "now & then crossing it (or some tributary stream) by a bridge of stone" until they reached Capel Curig "(lying in full view & almost at the base of Snowdon)." Here McVickar described feeling "for the first time the power of mountain scenery—the perfect loneliness—the presure of Nature & the abscence of Man—more overpowering in its suggestions than I anticipated." They arrived at Bangor "with the sun an hour high," and therefore with fresh horses set out at once for "the Menai Bridge connecting Angelsea with the mainland (the 8th wonder of the world)—This chain bridge is on the suspension principle—& the boldest that has ever been effected—it is as beautiful too as bold for while it strides the Sea like a Colossus from rock to rock—from the water it looks like a cobweb in lightness." The bridge had been opened for traffic in 1826.

They were delayed in leaving Bangor by "a visit from a family of the Van Warts—formerly of New York now of Manchester—She is a sister of Washington Irving." There they met William Magee, archbishop of Dublin, "staying in the House." From there they drove along a road which McVickar described as "a terrific one—cut out of the side of the rocky promontories wh. rise out into the sea," until they came to Aberconway. After examining its ruined castle they proceeded to spend the 4th of July in St. Asaph. The cathedral where they attended the Sunday service and communion was to McVickar "plain but impressive." The statue of William Davies Shipley, Mrs. Heber's father, erected near the cathedral pulpit, reminded McVickar that it was his father, Jonathan Shipley, who as bishop of St. Asaph befriended Benjamin Franklin and opposed the American policy of George III.

The professor lost no opportunity for sounding the economic condition of any community where they might be stopping. So it was that after service he made a point of walking down "an adjoining country road." There he paused to talk to "a working man with his 3 little children." In a friendly manner Prof Mac questioned him "as to his means of support etc.—found that he rented a cottage & garden for 4 guis. a year (rather lower than it wd. be with us—that his wages averaged 10/ a week (about the same as a labourer wd. get with us)—that 6/6 was expended for bread & 1/6 laid aside for rent wh. left but 2/ for clothes etc—his wife being unable to add anything & children in the neighbourhood so much more plentious than work that his eldest could not earn his board." Again, after dinner the professor visited "the interior of a Welsh Cottage which left a most agreable impression of the comforts that can be accumulated in a brick paved room—12 feet square & open to the thatch above—In truth," he concluded, "in the way of comforts the English are a pampered people down to the very labourer."

The next morning McVickar set out before breakfast to investigate "one of the numerous lead mines of this District—I looked down into the bowells of the mountain—Soon after," he added, "drove up to the castle of their great Proprietor, Lord Grosvenor." After breakfast they all visited the Holy Well of St. Winefred where Prof Mac "drank of the pure if not holy water—tho' the rags & crutches suspended around it of those who had been healed of their ailments by drinking or bathing in it I confess were no great temptation." He discounted any idea of "defilement," however, since he was told "the Spring throws out by calculation 200 tons of water pr. minute," and he appreciated the "superstitious reverence" which dated from the early Saxons.

The professor was more concerned about the lead mine and returned to examine its "gallery & the wonders of a rail road running above a niche into the mountain & connecting with the shaft we looked down into this Morng.—the utter darkness—the low arch bending us double—the narrow plank on wh. we walked with the running water beneath our feet,—soon satisfied us."

North through Harwarden and the walled city of Chester the

McVickars hastened in their roomy barouche until they reached Berkenhead-on-the-Mersey. There they suffered "a vexatious delay of 3 hours in crossing the river—the tide was too low to cross with the carriage." It was not alone the delay, but "an expense wh. in New York we knew nothing of," that prompted the professor to suggest that "a floating dock would obviate all difficulties." On finally reaching Liverpool they put up at the Star & Garter where they found their cousin from Hyde Park, William Allen, was also stopping and was able to give them firsthand news from home.

Liverpool itself, they felt, was a "dull, uninteresting place—doubly so in this unceasing rainy weather." Nevertheless, McVickar "visited the Exchange—Athenaeum—Royal Institution etc." and inquired about the preparations being made for the Liverpool and Manchester railway. He had no particular friends in the city, but "seeing the name McVickar in an old decaying mansion," he said, "I remembered dining with an eminent merchant of that name at his country seat in 1805—I went in—introduced myself—made enquiry & found it was the same—grown old & sunk in fortune—but still retaining great respectability." From him the professor learned that "Banking in Liverpool is looked upon with jealousy & does not do much—Their mode of business is to keep a current a/c with merchants—charging & allowing the same rate of Int.—Formerly 5. now on permanent deposit, not more than 2. or 3.—the bills discounted are geny. drafts on London—they charging ¼ per cent on all advances—or money paid over—& having the benefit of unused balances. Private notes of hand do not exist—& their only currency is Bank of Engd. notes & specie—Country notes are frowned upon." Such "details of Polit Eccny" were to be of use later in America.

They were prevented from leaving Liverpool until 8 o'clock on the night of July 7 because of the "want of posthorses (all at the races)—Races our bane—had to force our way thro' the returning crowd of drunken mob—we were literally beset by these scoundrels several times & our only security lay in the multitude." Eventually they reached an inn at Ormskirk and the following morning they "took a long ride to breakfast" at Preston. This the professor found "remarkably neat for a manufacturing place." While breakfast was being prepared, he was "showed thro' a machine shop wh. keeps employed 180 men at from 14/ to 28/ pr week." Thus he concluded "the distress among this class is greatly overstated—it varies with trade but the poor rates in this country are not a great burden."

On they went through Garstang, pausing only for a "rapid visit" to the dominating castle at Lancaster, and finally arrived at Kendal. Here they presented a letter of introduction to the Braithwaites and were received with "a gentlemanly but Quaker-like simplicity." Only the son of the family, "a pleasing intelligent youth," was at home to do the honors, but soon Mr. Crewsden, his uncle, sent them an invitation to dinner. After they had "joined in the parade of proclaiming the new King," they drove out for a two o'clock dinner with Mr. Crewsden, "the great banker of Kendal." McVickar referred to the mansion and its family as having "more of wealth & refinement & accomplishment than belongs with us to the Society of *Friends*." He learned that "the cost of the House & outbuildings" was about $35,000 (£7000) and noted "with us it would have cost at least as much."

* * *

Among the subjects McVickar taught at Columbia was "Belles Lettres," and while himself no poet he was as keen a critic of poetry as he was of art. It was with much eagerness that he looked forward to meeting the poets of the Lake District. He found them more ready to discuss politics and social reform, however, than poetry. Since these subjects were also close to his heart he responded with pleasure and earned at once their respect and friendship.

Finally, McVickar could write on July 10 as he sat looking from the window of Low Wood Inn, "This is the most beautiful point of Windermere, a lone house on the very brink of the lake." After a "delightful excursion on the lake at Bowness sketching a little and quarreling with our sketches because they would not convey the hundredth part of the beauty we saw," they drove on to William Wordsworth's Rydal Mount, where the poet had been living for the past seventeen years. The house was described by John McVickar as small and old-fashioned, but comfortable and romantically situated; Rydal water beneath you, and Windermere in the distance. They arrived "at the most awkward hour of early dinner," but after a short delay their reception was most hospitable.[2]

Wordsworth appeared to McVickar as a tall, grave, simple-mannered man, apparently about sixty; his wife kind beyond what strangers had a right to expect, and his sister, Dorothy, who would at one time have loved Coleridge had she not loved her brother more, "pleasing though less decided." But as Prof Mac put it, "a walk and animated conversation made all easy. Mr. Wordsworth talked much of Bishop Hobart's visit, remembered a discussion they had about a word, and desired me to tell him that Capel was the Welsh corruption of Chapel."

McVickar had thought of William Wordsworth as older, perhaps because his *Lyrical Ballads* and *Prelude,* works of Miltonian importance, gave the impression of his having reached maturity over thirty years ago. He had recently been on a jaunt to Ireland and, McVickar observed, "praises Sadler & his speculations on Ireland." (The Tory M.P. Michael Thomas Sadler, an advocate of poor laws for Ireland, had figured in the discussion when McVickar had been invited by Parnell to meet with the committee on that subject.) Wordsworth seemed to the professor to be living "in retirement, with some local salary from the government," as a distributor of stamps. It was evident, however, that the past ten years had been what De Quincy later termed Wordsworth's militant period.

Speaking of Wellington, who had two years ago reluctantly relinquished his post as commander-in-chief to accept the premiership, Wordsworth told his American visitor "he regarded his power as a military usurpation and gave some anecdotes of his uncourteous demeanor towards the council, lying on the sofa and uttering his dictum, 'That wont do,' etc." Wordsworth seemed to be convinced that America under Andrew Jackson was threatened by the same sort of thing. "I could not make him understand," McVickar wrote, "that no danger existed of military domination in the United States."

There was another poet Mrs. Heber had told them they would find in the Lake district, Felicia Dorothea Hemans. Her *Hymns for Childhood* had been familiar to the McVickars in America for the past three years. Wordsworth assured them she had come from her home in Wavertree near Liverpool and was "staying in the neighbourhood." He suggested they call on her and come back the next day for "an early tea" at Rydal Mount.

Returning to their inn they received a friendly invitation from Mrs. Hemans to visit her in the romantic solitude of *Dove's Nest,* the cottage Thomas De Quincy had once leased to be near Wordsworth. It resulted in "an excursion with Mrs. H and her interesting boys." Mrs. Hemans had five children but was now separated from her husband. "This most lovely of lakes" seemed to the McVickars far from their homeland where, as she described it in her *Landing of the Pilgrims,* "The breaking waves dashed high on a stern and rock bound coast."

Sunday, on Wordsworth's advice, they drove in their roomy barouche to the retired village and model church of Conistone on the banks of its own placid lake. But by half past four they had returned to Rydal Mount. There the hospitality was such that Prof Mac could describe their hosts as "a family toward whom we now feel as friends,—simple-hearted and kind feeling." And as for Wordsworth himself, McVickar now considered from his firsthand "knowledge of the author, I think I must retract whatever I have said or thought against his poetry. His conversation is full of interest from deep feeling and talent and marked by peculiar simplicity and modesty."

It was a "short but delightful visit," and before they left the poet wrote in Anna McVickar's album:

Hast thou seen with flash incessant
  Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
  No one knows, by what device?

Such are thoughts—a wind swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea;
Such is life, and death a shadow
From the Rock—Eternity.

Sixteen miles through the intervening hills brought them to Keswick.

"Our morning was wet and cold," McVickar recalled, "the ladies employed themselves within doors, while I found my way to Southey's residence, prettily situated on a rising ground at the outskirts of the village," and known as Greta Hall. When Robert Southey had planned with Coleridge and Robert Lovell a pantisocratic colony, it was to be on the banks of Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River. Although they had married three of the Fricker sisters with this in mind, their utopian ideas dissolved into the practical necessity of staying at home where Southey had now been poet laureate for many years. He had led a contented life as a man of letters, but by the time of the McVickars' visit the death of his eldest son and favorite daughter rather sadly depleted his family.

"I found Southey in his library," McVickar noted, "with his only son, his last hope, a promising and pleasing boy of twelve, and a young man whom he introduced as his nephew." After a cordial greeting Prof Mac returned to the inn. He then proceeded to take the ladies on a "tour of the lake, Derwent Water, visiting the fall and the rocks of Borrowdale," and finally brought them around to Southey's at six o'clock "according to promise."

They were kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. Southey, Mrs. Southey's sister, and three pleasing daughters "just grown up." Southey's nephew, "Mr. Hill of Oxford," completed the house party, and from him Prof Mac received much detailed information on the university's system of examining students. It satisfied McVickar that "their questions are of a high character & require real Knowledge."

McVickar described the Southeys' home with its noted collection of fourteen thousand books and manuscripts as "splendidly furnished with literary treasures & fashionable in all its arrangements. Wordsworth's noble bust is one of the greatest ornaments of the Sitting Room here, as Southey's is at Wordsworth's." On the wall was a portrait of the young poet White, about whose high promise even Byron had agreed with the poet laureate. Southey had been attacted by a volume of poems published by this son of a Nottingham butcher when he was eighteen, and had obtained for him a sizarship at Cambridge, where overwork brought about his early death. The year following Southey published in three volumes White's *Remains,* with a sketch of his life which Professor McVickar had seen.

"Southey has a striking face," McVickar observed, "very like, I should say from the portrait, to that of his friend Henry Kirk White." McVickar was keen to discuss the poet laureate's last book, *Sir Thomas More, or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society.* In these two volumes, which purported to be a series of interviews between himself and the ghost of More, Southey had discussed what he felt were the social evils of the day.

On the whole, McVickar found Southey "free in conversation, but without the flow that gives interest & poetic power to Wordsworth's. His views were full of anxiety and apprehension for the future." The professor remembered old copies of the *Quarterly Review* in which Southey had supported Church and State and opposed Roman Catholic emancipation, as his host was saying to him, "The property of the Church will not long rest untouched. Unless the Whig leaders can be frightened into its defense the next session of Parliament will organize the attack," which, he added, "would have been made in the present had the Duke felt himself strong enough." Wellington, however, seemed to Southey to have "broken the arm of his strength in yielding the Catholic question."

So he went on, speaking "well of Oxford, ill of Cambridge—an Atheistic party has risen up in it—long an isoteric doctrine—now open—of wh. young Macaulay is a leader." Before Thomas Babington Macaulay became a barrister and distinguished himself as a mainstay of the *Edinburgh Review,* he had been a visitor to the Political Economy Club. McVickar had met him in London, where Macaulay at the age of twenty-nine was beginning his first year as an M.P. The professor soon discovered that "of Polit

Econy Southey professes ignorance," but the poet did venture to express a fear that "this generation may not pass before the temple falls and another colony be transferred to our shores." Looking with reverence and pride to the old virtues and institutions of his country, Southey obviously considered their preservation "the only safety in this age of revolution." In short, he seemed to John McVickar "a true Englishman in the best sense of the term."

Their now "cheerful & scientific young friend, Mr. Hill," came after breakfast the following day "with some papers" for the professor and Anna's book" in which Southey had inscribed a poem which reflected his conversation with the American professor of political economy.

Both in civil and in barbarous states,
The course of action takes its bias, less
From meditation and the calm resolve
Of wisdom, than from accident and temper.
Private advantage at all cost pursued,
The humor, will, and pleasure of the leaders
The passions and the madness of the people
Under all climes, and in all forms of rule,
Alike the one, the many, and the few;
Among all nations of whatever tint,
All languages, these govern everwhere;
The difference only is of less or more,
As chance, to use the common speech, may sway;
In wiser words, as Providence directs."

Hill persuaded the McVickars to join him in an excursion to the top of Skiddaw. So, with a guide, two ponies, a cloak, sketchbooks and provisions they set off. Prof Mac called it a new and inspiriting journey, saying, "We grew stronger the higher we mounted. A bright sun, flying clouds, lakes, mountains and rich valleys like gardens, were above, around us and beneath us."

On Skiddaw they met at least six or eight young men strolling over its varied surface, some botanizing with their tin cases at their backs, some with hammers and bags of specimens, and one with his little net for catching insects and bottles for preserving them—all earnest and happy in their own pursuits. "Science being common makes it sit more easily upon the young men here than with us," the professor observed. "Thus does education tell more here than with us for the gratification of after life." The same difference McVickar had noticed in England in the matter of female education. "Modern languages when acquired are more familiarly understood," he noted, "and such skill with the pencil as with us would make an artist, seems to belong here to every well-educated young woman."

As the party returned they found Robert Southey "waiting for us about half-way up the mountain," Prof Mac wrote. "The more I converse with this celebrated man the more I am delighted. Moral & religious truth & sound political principles are all elevated in his mind into a warm-hearted enthusiasm & expressed in choice language but with the greatest simplicity & unpretendingness of manner."

Southey conducted them to their inn, where the conversation turned to the poetry of Walter Scott, whose refusal of the laureateship had passed the honor on to his friend. When Southey learned the professor was carrying no letter of introduction to Scott, "while we were dining," McVickar noted, "he went home and wrote one for us." He also gave the professor a letter to a certain "Mr. Morrison of London, and proferred others which I thought we would not need." James Morrison had stopped into see Southey at Keswick some seven years before on his way to New Lanark-on-the-Clyde with the idea of investing in Robert Owen's experiment in socialism. He had made a great fortune in a novel business system, Southey explained, and was now entering parliament as a liberal.

"Prepare," said the poet laureate, as he shook McVickar's hand in parting, "prepare to receive in your happy country a new emigration of pilgrims."

Leaving Keswick at five, they were able to make an excursion on Ullswater where they saw "many little fairy frigates" set out by the companion of the late world navigator, James Cook, and other lakeside residents. They returned in a shower which "almost flooded us in our open boat" and sought shelter in "the Giants cave" at Penrith.

From Penrith twelve miles brought them to Carlisle. "This began again to be classic ground," the professor observed. "We thought of the Roman wall & we looked with respect at the castle where the unhappy Mary was confined, the spot where McIvor suffered & the Solway Sands where Redgauntlet made his abode among the fishermen." From Carlisle to where "two turnpike gates—close together—mark the now peaceful boundary line" of Scotland, they crossed "into a most romantic region—reminding us of Scott's finest pictures and justifying them all." The barouche brought them finally to Longholm where, he declared, "A good Scotch tea with all its accompaniments of sweetmeats, honey etc is now sending us to a welcome bed."

CHAPTER 4

The Torch of Scotland

Intellects of Edinburgh . . . Schools and Scholars . . . With Scott at Abbotsford

McVickar approached Edinburgh with high regard for its reputation as a seat of learning, and with a personal attachment because of Samuel Bard's recollections of his student days there in the time of Adam Smith and David Hume. As he had investigated the university system at Oxford, so here McVickar inquired into the University's organization and methods of teaching. Wherever they went, McVickar studied the use of Gothic architecture in ecclesiastical buildings, so that eventually he became an authority in a field where he had long been an enthusiast.

At Selkirk the McVickars' barouche struck off from the direct road to Edinburgh to take Abbotsford and Melrose in their way. The professor described their drive "among great swelling hills (unenclosed) bare of woods & in general of cultivation with a few scattered sheep or cattle—few houses & few inhabitants." Yet somewhere beyond those hills was the romantic person of Walter Scott.[1]

John McVickar recalled that on his previous visit to England Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was just appearing. It had been followed over the years by *Marmion* and then *The Lady of the Lake*. Their success, McVickar understood, had enabled Scott to purchase Abbotsford-on-the-Tweed, where he had written a succession of novels beginning with *Rob Roy*. Six years after Walter Scott had been created a baronet, he had been ruined financially by certain commitments of his publishing firm. In that year, 1818, the newly appointed professor of belles lettres and political economy at Columbia had read with interest Scott's attack, entitled *Thoughts on the proposed change of Currency,* opposing the government's plan to suppress small bank notes.

Professor McVickar had often pictured to himself the pathetic figure of this author struggling to pay off a debt of honor; since Scott had suffered a stroke of paralysis the previous February the picture had darkened. The McVickars might even have hesitated to intrude if it had not been for Robert Southey's letter.

It was with some surprise that McVickar noted on approaching Sir Walter Scott's "noble castlellated mansion, the splendid liveries, etc, and air of luxury, in short, I had not anticipated."

The family were out, so Southey's letter "together with my own card" were left with the liveried servant. The heavy barouche rumbled on two miles further to Chiefswood, the residence of Scott's married daughter, Charlotte Sophia, "to whom we had also a letter from Mrs. Heber." Here again they met with the same disappointment, but were somewhat reconciled by an excursion to Melrose Abbey nearby.

"While wandering among these ruins, monuments equally of Gothic taste & modern barbarism wh. filled us with anger as well as admiration," McVickar admitted, "a rather tall gentleman came in and introduced himself as Mr. Lockhart." John Gibson Lockhart, at whose cottage they had just left Amelia Heber's letter, was seven years John McVickar's junior. Since marrying Scott's daughter ten years ago he had written a novel, and published a translation of *Ancient Spanish Ballads* and a *Life of Burns* besides editing the *Quarterly Review* for the past five years. To McVickar Lockhart's appearance and manner seemed "rather American than British—of a thin slight figure—black hair—face palid approaching sallow—& with a dash of the billious in his sentiments as well as his complexion." Although he now urged their returning for a visit it seemed wiser to the travelers to postpone their acceptance.

It was near five o'clock before they could break away from the enchantment of Melrose, and there were still thirty-five miles to drive before dinner. This they did not have until they reached Edinburgh about midnight, at which "late hour" they were fortunate in finding rooms at 19 Princes Street. The next morning, after establishing themselves in one large comfortable parlor with books, writing, and sketches, etc., Prof Mac set out on what he termed, "my tour of letter delivery."

McVickar's "first direction" was to Francis Jeffrey's residence in Moray Place, "one of the most splendid Squares in the New town of Edinburgh." The family had moved out to their summer place at Craigcrook, and since Thomas Chalmers was nearby, McVickar "called according to promise—interrupted him in his writing & paid but a short visit (he seemed a little put out by the interruption)." His next call was, "in passing, on an advocate of the name of Somerville, thinking he might be my old acquaintance of 25 years ago—I was mistaken—found him dead." He did find a friend, J. McCormick, "a thriving lawyer & High Sheriff of the Isle of Bute to wh. he warmly invited us as he was just setting off for his country house on that island." Bishop Walker was also out of town, so the professor concluded, "we have little prospect of acquaintance here."

The following morning the weather was brighter, and in spite of the curt reception given McVickar on the previous day by Thomas Chalmers, the family decided to accept his invitation to call again on that day. The McVickars remembered how much they had enjoyed Chalmers' preaching in London, and indeed the disagreeable impression left by the more recent encounter was soon dispelled. They were cordially welcomed by Thomas Chalmers' wife, "a very lovely & intelligent woman—3 silent daughters & the Dr. with characteristic frankness & simplicity— Some half dozen young students or Licentiates completed our circle—a chapter in the Bible & family prayers—all kneeling—was a preparation for breakfast," Prof Mac observed, "wh. made us think of home." The next three hours passed away "quickly & pleasantly at & around the table." During that time McVickar learned much of the working of Edinburgh University, which his host had been serving for the past two years as professor of theology. When the time came to leave, "instead of separating we went out together & made a new engagement for Monday Morng," and, McVickar added, "Before parting Dr. C. wrote me a bundle of notes addressed to the Professors & leading literary men—in order that I might extend my acquaintance at my leisure."

John McVickar had brought from America a letter from Charles Wilkes, a former trustee of Columbia whose daughter Charlotte had married Francis Jeffrey. Jeffrey and Sidney Smith, the divine wit, belonged to the Whig group which had met in the Freemasons' Tavern before the Political Economy Club took over, and it was in Jeffrey's London flat that Smith had first suggested founding the *Edinburgh Review*. Under Jeffrey's editorship during the past twenty-seven years the *Review* had become a Whig magazine, but he had now retired and been made lord advocate.

It was in reply to this introduction that Jeffrey wrote McVickar explaining he "was unluckily engaged in court when you took the trouble to call at my house with Mr. Wilkes's letter." Soon after their wedding in New York in 1813, the Jeffreys had taken an old keep with a disorderly kitchen garden on the eastern slope of Cortorphine Hill, where they spent the summers improving the grounds. It was from there McVickar received Lord Jeffrey's invitation requesting, "the pleasure of your company (by which we mean that of your whole party) at dinner here tomorrow. We are scarcely three miles out on the Queensferry road and sufficiently well known to all coachmen and postboys." They were to dine about six o'clock but "if the weather is fine," Jeffrey insisted, "we shall like you to come early as there are some pretty views we should like to show you from our field." [2]

On their way to dinner at Craigcrook, they stopped off at Milburn Tower, the residence of Sir Robert Liston. Professor McVickar had known Sir Robert during the six years he had been British ambassador to the United States. The ladies remained in the carriage while McVickar was ushered into "a splendid Gothic drawing room, (paneled with cedar)." After a few minutes Sir Robert came in apologizing for the delay, as he was dressing to go out to dinner, and the professor noted, "at the age of 86 he is as hale & hearty as with us most men at 60."

The barouche reached Craigcrook just in time for their dinner appointment. They found the Jeffreys' house "a modernized chapelry of the palace of Holyrood, having the picturesqueness of the old and the luxury of the modern days united," while the style of living, according to the professor, "was well calculated to set off both."

Charlotte Jeffrey, whom they had not seen since her wedding in New York, received the McVickars "like old friends. She declared she wd. have known us both," Prof Mac said, adding, "& we should certainly her, by looks *probably* but without question by voice and laugh which in this land of Ossian, I must say, came o'er me like the days of very youth."

During the course of dinner, Francis Jeffrey said he had brought out almost a hundred numbers of the *Edinburgh Review* containing in all about two hundred of his own contributions. He disliked Shelley and Keats and praised Thomas Campbell, who for the past ten years had been editing the *New Monthly Magazine*. Jeffrey admired Samuel Rogers who had been a fellow member of the Whig Club at the Freemason's Tavern in London. A new edition of Roger's *Italy* was so elaborately illustrated that McVickar later heard Lady Blessington remark, "It would have been dished if it were not for the plates." Many of these illustrations were by the English landscape painter Joseph Mallord William Turner, whose recent "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus" McVickar much admired.

Now, with the return of the Whigs to power, Jeffrey was entering Parliament and McVickar was particularly interested in his exposition of the Scottish Reform Bill he was planning to introduce. His way of putting things seemed to the professor "perfectly unique. It is a singular compound of knowledge, talent, satire, and badinage, covering much natural kindness and good feeling."

The next day being Sunday, the journal noted: "At ten (the Church hour) walked to St. John's Church at the end of Princes St. under the Castle." McVickar considered this "the most beautiful modern Gothic we have seen except perhaps the little Chapel of St. Margaret—the yellow light from the upper windows of colored glass streamed down on Gothic arch & clustered pillars with fine effect." He spoke of the sermon as "a fair & formal one on the death of the King." Later a break in the weather "tempted us onwards to the Calton Hill wh. with its own monuments of Grecian taste & Scottish proverty etc.—noble scenery around & this most picturesque of all Northern Cities at its base," combined to make Princes Street "the most beautiful promenade in Europe."

Francis Jeffrey spoke in the highest terms of the minister of St. George's Church, Andrew Mitchell Thompson, calling him "the sledge hammer of divines." McVickar had read of the attack this evangelical reformer had made on the British and Foreign Bible Society for including the *Apocrypha* in the volumes they distributed. Therefore that Sunday afternoon the McVickars walked "through sunshine and rain with all its intermediate gradations" to hear him. Prof Mac was moved by the sermon and counted Andrew Thompson as "the most powerful reasoner and the most eloquent speaker I have yet heard. He is a little-big man with broad shoulders, a coarse face and an enormous head, fitted for a leader either in battle or argument. He put me in mind of Willie Garlas in *Macniel.*

> 'Hap what would Will stood a castle,
> Or for safety or for war."

His sermon was written and read, but, McVickar noted, "it was read as it was written, with freedom and earnestness. I have heard no extempore preacher but Robert Hall," Prof Mac observed, adding, "Chalmers writes and commits to memory."

"After church," McVickar recorded, he "paid a queer visit to a queer man, Professor Wilson, and agreed to breakfast with him tomorrow when, perhaps, I may think better of my wild brother." McVickar's introduction had come through Lockhart, who had found in Wilson his main support in publishing *Blackwood's Magazine.* For eight years now *Noctes Ambrosianae* had been appearing in the magazine in which Wilson figured as "Christopher North" and James Hogg as the "Ettrick Shepherd."

The two professors of moral philosophy, McVickar of Columbia and Wilson of Edinburgh, were alone and had "much talk." McVickar found his colleague "a strong minded, unpolished man, but not of the kind one expects to see in the Chair of Morals." John Wilson had been elected under the strong Tory influence of Scott and Lockhart despite much "opposition from Jeffrey." There was a familiar ring to Wilson's account of disputes over administration within the university—reminding McVickar that this problem was not unique to Columbia College. At that very time, Professor McVickar learned, "a Royal Commission was sitting in order to determine the relative powers of professors, patrons, visitors, etc."

McVickar knew it would interest the Columbia faculty back home to hear of the present organization of the ancient Scots university—how "each professor governs his own Class, & the body of professors the whole college according to usage or opinion, with little interference from higher powers." Professor Wilson told him that "the whole number of matriculated students this year is about 2500. The largest class is that of chemistry, about 500—Moral Phil about 180."

As to financing: "for each course *£4/10s.* is paid to the professor by each student, which with a small salary from city funds," McVickar observed, "makes their situation rather better than ours—& with a vacation of 7 months quite another thing." This made it possible for "the majority of the students to have other occupations during vacation, such as teachers, tutors, writers, etc."

In the course of his long conference with the strange professor who "reads his lectures and has no examination of his students," merely receiving from his class "voluntary themes" and aiding them "by advice in their studies," McVickar was impressed with what seemed new ideas in advanced education. Of his own manner of work, Professor Wilson said that when he did study or write, it was generally for fifteen hours at a time, from six in the morning to nine at night "without moving or eating," but he allowed that his "fits of intellectual labor were succeeded by equally immovable fits of indolence."

McVickar came away with the feeling that he could agree with Francis Jeffrey that John Wilson was a "talented & strong-minded man." One instance of this cited by Professor McVickar was on "the subject of McCulloch's testimony being introduced (as when I had been present before the Committee of the House)—he spoke of him as a blind obstinate kind of mind that waited till it was driven perforce into truth & then with perfect simplicity & composure boasted of being the first to discover it." Nevertheless, on a subsequent visit with J. McCormick, McVickar "heard somewhat against my friend Wilson—in his base attacks on private character in Blackwood—& against my great Preacher Thompson on the same score (as his enemies charge him) viz as foremost in all troubled waters, & escaping from consequences not in the most honourable style." This criticism McVickar rather discounted since he knew "McC. was one of the few malcontents in the case of Jeffrey's election as Dean of the Faculty."

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As advanced education was McVickar's profession, so schools were what he called his "hobby." Therefore he not only made detailed notes on the workings of Edinburgh University but also took care to investigate two of the city's more important schools. The family continued to meet the men and women who were responsible for Edinburgh's high reputation as an intellectual center and was pleased to find the tradition of the McVickar clan still remembered in Scotland.

John McVickar's next concern was to look into Edinburgh's famous High-School at the foot of Calton Hill. This "recent & splendid creation" he understood had cost the city £25,000. Here he delivered his letters of introduction to the classical scholar Aglionby Ross Carson, who was then rector, "was introduced by the Rector to the other Teachers & visited & inspected each Room (as minutely as time admitted)." The institution called from McVickar his "respect but not admiration." There were four teachers beside the rector and the total number of scholars was 750.[3]

In the High-School McVickar observed, "I found what I expected.—that the Monitorial System was a *humbug*—it is continued now only in form for ½ an hour after school opens & then only in some rooms—all teachers acknowledge its inadequacy." McVickar discovered this was the case also with "the famous system of voluntary lessons (once so blindly lauded)—it was found to withdraw students so much from duty, to lead to duplicity & idleness that it is now little practiced." Their lessons were short and learned at home. They had occasional Latin themes given them, and McVickar noted, "an English ode was read & (at my request with great modesty) presented to me by the youthful Author—

The State of Discipline is not so exact as Mr. Ogilby's," he observed referring to the headmaster of the Columbia Grammar School, "occasionally great noise—but again strict silence—thus after the poem there was loud & unrepressed applause for a minute at least."

At their rooms in Princes Street, Prof Mac found Mrs. Jeffrey with the ladies and was soon joined by Dr. Chalmers and Sir Robert Liston. After their other guests had left they went out with Thomas Chalmers "to the house of Mr. Thomas Erskine, once a literary & now a Religious leader in Scotland." Erskine had been a brilliant member of the Edinburgh faculty of advocates, but after succeeding to his family's estate had devoted himself to theology. McVickar had studied his *Remarks on the Internal Evidence of the truth of Revealed Religion* in connection with his own courses at Columbia and heard discussed a more recent publication which Erskine called the *Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel.*

It was Thomas Erskine's letter that Edward Irving had read aloud to Coleridge and McVickar in London. Erskine's conversation showed that he was continuing as "the great upholder of the miraculous effusion of the Spirit in the cases at Greenock" to which the letter had referred. Nevertheless Professor McVickar remained unconvinced by the brief offered by the learned advocate and considered it responsible for "a mania which is working up the minds of many here into enthusiasm," and he added, "I fear into insanity."

Eliza McVickar was anxious to see the botanic gardens which had been an inspiration to her father during his student days in Edinburgh. So the party separated, Erskine accompanying McVickar to the new Academy, an institution which, he explained, "had been raised within a few years as a rival (tho' not so acknowledged) to the High School." The Academy appeared to McVickar distinguished from the latter by being more aristocratic and more upon the English system.

In search for ideas which might be applied to elementary schools in America, Professor McVickar had secured a letter of introduction to John Williams, the rector, an Oxford man of Balliol, whom he now found "intelligent, learned and full of candor." The curriculum in this school was seven years. McVickar noted that "they read more Greek than is done in the University here," and as proof of their thoroughness in Latin, Dr. Williams called out a student, "a lad of 15, son of Lord Moncreiff," to show his general knowledge of the language. The visiting professor was then requested to give him a passage in *Livy,* "a book he had never read." The result astonished McVickar. His examination, "after an attentive perusal of the passage," indicated that he was familiar not only with the language but with the author. Others followed him with the same general result, so that McVickar declared as he came away with Erskine, "I have been delighted."

The two men then proceeded to the "splendid Botanic garden" under the direction of Robert Graham, the professor of botany. There they joined Chalmers and the ladies and "lounged till near five oclock." By this time Prof Mac had come to know Thomas Erskine as "a noble, pure, talented and pious mind, but too likely, I fear, to become a wreck through Religious Enthusiasm. His conversation saddened while it charmed me—It left an impression," McVickar reflected, "I shall not soon lose."

Sir Robert Liston had invited them to breakfast the next day, and during the course of that visit McVickar learned from Sir Robert that he was "a selfmade man—his mother was the farmeress (as termed here) of the place he has now adorned with a splendid Gothic residence—& the cottage he occupied he piously preserves alongside of his castellated Tower." It seemed that when only a fifteen-year-old plough boy he became a "travelling companion" of a youth of his own age, the son of Sir Gilbert Elliot. Later, through the earl of Bute, he was "attached to a foreign embassy—here he rose regularly & his long residence at Constantinople made him wealthy." Now the former ambassador to the United States was engaged in restoring his native village, and the McVickars were fascinated with the "models of cottages etc wh. filled his table."

Speaking of Mrs. Grant of Laggan, Sir Robert said that he had a message for Professor McVickar from her. The professor felt honored to hear that the famous authoress claimed him as "her cousin, her maiden name being McVickar, and that she desired much to see me." Prof Mac was familiar with Anne Grant's highly popular *Letters from the Mountains* and her *Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlands.* She had been the wife of the minister of Laggan, Inverness-shire, and for many years now she had been the center of a literary circle in Edinburgh.

After breakfast the McVickars drove to Mrs. Grant's large house in the outskirts of Edinburgh and were ushered into what Prof Mac described as "an empty but not unfurnished, literary-looking drawing-room." Mrs. Grant soon came in supported by crutches and aided by a servant, looking old and broken by years but still with much dignity. The moment she sat down, however, John McVickar was impressed with the fact that she was "full of life and interest."

The history of the family name, the crest with its double-headed eagle and the motto 'Dominus Providebat', she entered upon "with all her Scottish feeling." Her first question was as to the coat of arms the American McVickars bore. Then she proceeded to tell of "the glens they once held—how the Campbells derived all their property & power from them by intermarriage with the heiress of the McVickar's."

She told Prof Mac that the earl of Glasgow was the present head of their clan and urged that he go and see him. "So full indeed was Mrs. Grant of these thoughts that she wrote in Anna's album, evidently impromptu, and expressive," as McVickar put it, "of what she deemed our feelings:

"Who the kindly heart would blame,
That glows at a congenial name?
These kindred names, well known and dear,
Are music to a Highland ear.
Oft waking in a Highland eye
The sacred font of sympathy.
These home-bred feelings to restrain,
The wide Atlantic rolls in vain.
Where lovely maids and gallant men
Dwell sheltered in their shady glen,

With pilgrim steps their exiled race
Shall fondly come to view the place,
And tho' assigned a happier lot,
Shall bless the old ancestral spot."

Before setting out on an excursion through the Trossacks, the McVickars stopped a night with the Jeffreys at Craigcrook. There Sir John Archibald Murray, Morehead Dean, and other men of letters were invited to meet them at dinner. This jaunt through the Scottish Lake District was noted in detail in McVickar's journal. As they went they "read & reread" a copy of Scott's *Lady of the Lake* which they had brought for the purpose, McVickar declaring, "No guide book could be more exact—Scott has painted every object with a fidelity equal to his other merits." A Highland cart carried them to Loch Katrine where they were met by a boat which took them to Ellens Island. McVickar observed, "Ellens bower is like because it has been accomodated to the description by Lord Willoughby—& on our Highland ponies (I walking) & with a dozen half clad Highland guides, for no one here seems to have any work to do, we set forward." Thus they arrived on the banks of Loch Lomand "drenched almost to the skin.— After 5 Highland mountain miles, a little Highland whisky over a turf fire in a Highland hut soon set us up again."

By seven o'clock Friday evening the family was back in Edinburgh. There after "a hasty dinner" McVickar was off "to pay a visit to Bp. Walker from whom," he said, "I had received a very kind letter." The new bishop of Edinburgh had much to tell of the Scottish Episcopal Theological College on whose faculty he served.

* * *

McVickar's record of his visit at Abbotsford illustrated his manner of approach to any new acquaintance. He concerned himself with the person's background, environment, economic status, and where possible he uncovered some point of mutual interest. This, in his encounter with Sir Walter Scott, was the need for international copyright, but for the present McVickar and his family were overwhelmed with the charm of Scott's personality and the atmosphere of his baronial residence.

At half past nine Saturday morning, July 24, the McVickars bade a final farewell to Edinburgh, and having driven six miles out of the way to visit Roslyn with its castle and abbey, did not arrive at Melrose until near half past five. On their arrival Prof Mac was delighted to find an invitation from the Lockharts "begging us to meet Sir Walter at dinner that day at that very hour—great was the hurry & scrambling with bags & baggage & dresses to get ready," McVickar recorded, yet "with such success that by six we reached their beautiful Cottage."[4]

As the McVickars' barouche approached, they had a glimpse of Walter Scott at the door, but by the time they had driven up to the door he had retired and Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart alone remained to welcome their guests. As the McVickars entered the drawing room, Sir Walter was standing with his daughter, Miss Scott, leaning somewhat upon his cane, probably because of his recent stroke, and in what Prof Mac described as "the mellow accents of that northern tongue," welcomed the visitors to Scotland. The company which included Sir Adam Ferguson, keeper of the regalia of Scotland, was not large but sufficiently so to afford a plea for laying the table on the green. A lowering sky, however, became by common consent an apology for an early return to the drawing room, where Miss Scott accompanying herself on the harp sang "with a most winning grace ballads of the olden time" which were Sir Walter's great delight.

McVickar's first impression of Sir Walter Scott was rather disappointing. As he recorded it, "Sir W's appearance is that of a man over 60—stout in frame—rather tall but losing something by a slight stoop—heavy features & rather a dull eye till lighted up in animated talk. He was kind & courteous but did not say much and when he did speak," McVickar felt he lacked the "precision of thought and power of language" which had so recently charmed him in Southey and Sir James Macintosh. The evening passed pleasantly, however, and before they left they accepted an invitation to stay at Abbotsford the next day.

The day being Sunday, they attended service at the kirk, occupying Sir Walter Scott's pew, which was very near the pulpit.

"How did you like the preacher?" asked Sir Walter when Prof Mac met him after church.

"I confess I did not hear a single sentence."

"You must not complain," came the rejoinder. "You have heard as much as any of his hearers for ten years past."

This voiceless preacher, as McVickar afterwards found, was the father of the original of Dominie Sampson in Scott's *Guy Mannering.*

On approaching Abbotsford a second time they did not pause as before at the gate, but driving down through "the rich young woods that embower it, and passing through an arched and turreted gateway," found themselves in a noble court or quadrangle. "On this occasion," McVickar noted, "Sir Walter met us at the door and taking Eliza by the hand, led the way to the library."

They passed through a hall occupying the central front of the building; such a hall, McVickar felt, "as transports you at once into the regions of romance and the days of baronial chivalry; its walls and ceiling of dark oak wainscoting; at either end on a raised pedestal a mailed knight with visor down and spear in rest, like sentinals to challenge all who enter. Along the walls 'shield and spear and partisan' intermixed with horns of the bison and the elk and skins of beasts of prey, as if to mark its lord equally ready for the foray or the chase."

Finally they reached the library "with its noble dimensions and costly furniture; its book-cases and cabinets of odorous cedar; its ceiling of the same, paneled and carved after the model of Melrose; its well filled shelves; its beautiful oriel window projecting and spreading out over the Tweed; its curtains of crimson damask with heavy gold fringe; its varied articles of use, curiosity and luxury;" all combined in the professor's estimation to make it "a most splendid room."

Among the treasures, McVickar observed a silver sarcophagus enclosing some bones from Athens which Sir Walter told him had been "the gift of the unfortunate Bryon." In Thomas Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Bryon,* just published in 1830 the romantic poet was shown at his best. It was six years since Lord Byron had died but "his beautiful pale face—like a spirit's, good or evil," must have lingered in Scott's mind. As Prof Mac put it, "Byron he seems to have loved," and often referred to him with a tone of strong feeling as "poor Byron."

But with all its splendor the library did not compare in interest to the room beyond—Scott's private study; for there McVickar saw his table and his well-used, stuffed-leather chair, calling up the visions of past labors.[5]

Scott was just completing the second volume of his *History of Scotland* for Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopedia,* while at the same time carrying on in serial form his *Tales of a Grandfather.* In fact Lockhart stated that his father-in-law appeared to be writing as much as in the year before his stroke, writing new introductions to collected poetry and what he called *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft,* etc.

"That which lies upon the table," McVickar observed, "I dare not read: but from what he says conclude it is upon the superstitions of the Highlands."

Continuing with his description of the study, Prof Mac noted that around this room at the height of about ten feet—for the ceiling was a high one—ran a light gallery which gave access by a private door to Scott's bedroom so that he could at all times command privacy.

The buildings, as far as McVickar could see, were very extensive and lighted throughout by gas prepared in one of the remotest parts. It was hard for the professor to understand how Sir Walter Scott's style of living could continue with considerable state—"two servants in livery and his own gentleman in black in regular attendance"—for Prof Mac had recently been told more of the embarrassments arising from the failure of Scott's publishers with whom the law adjudged him to be in partnership. However, McVickar had heard from Francis Jeffrey and others in Edinburgh that these engagements, amounting originally to near one hundred thousand pounds, were in great measure liquidated, partly by a heavy life policy and partly by the sale of his subsequent works.

"Monday, 26th July," McVickar declared on the second day of their visit at Abbotsford, "shall be marked by us henceforth with a *white stone,* as having been spent with Sir Walter Scott alone." Then for the first time he was aware of being in the presence of *the mighty master;* for, as with magicians, "the spell increased as the circle narrowed."

John McVickar had come to realize that the author of *Ivanhoe* was not to be judged by his demeanor in general society; "he never argued, never dogmatized and never talked learnedly; his head and heart seemed filled with better thoughts and things; an overflowing benevolence; sympathy for all breathing things; an imagination that teemed with all images of natural loveliness; feelings that trembled with every touch of natural affection; a memory that so lived in the records of the romantic past that a metaphysician might well have doubted to which century its possessor in truth belonged; and a sweet simplicity and unassumingness of manner that added the attractiveness of childhood to the words and thoughts of genius,—these are the elements of his strength," McVickar reasoned, "and when seen in private they are overpowering in their influence." The first day they met at the Lockharts, McVickar admitted, "I thought I saw the marks of age in his conversation (I said to myself un peu lassé) but further intimacy leads me to correct that opinion."

It amazed Professor McVickar to see how a book, a portrait, or a chance word would unlock Scott's train of thought and feeling and imagery. "While his eye lightens up, often suffused with tears and his voice deepens to a tone that thrills through the nerves like the deep notes of the organ," the professor wrote, there would come the Border story, the touching ballad or the heart-rending incident.

"In this," said McVickar, "I can like him to nothing but his own picture of the awakened minstrel—when—

> The present scene, his future lot
> His toils, his wants, were all forgot."

It seemed to John McVickar an evidence of Sir Walter's true-hearted modesty that he never once heard him repeat a line of his own; and whenever the subject of his poems was alluded to, he avoided it with simplicity. In Scott, Prof Mac found a contrast of the "genus irritable" with which he had met much since leaving New York; for a sneer seemed as foreign to Scott's nature as it was to the expression of his countenance; and both in word and manner, he certainly appeared not to know what envy was. Of his contemporaries he spoke with respect and kindness and what at any time was wanting in praise was sure to be made up in kindness of manner.

The professor had an example of this when one evening he was telling of his visit to Chantrey's studio and of his surprise at finding Allan Cunningham employed there as clerk of the works. Scott reminded his guest that in the days when that poet was living near Robert Burns he was a stone mason. He then repeated a sea song of Allan Cunningham's beginning, "A wet sheet and a flowing sea." Scott's recitation of this poem from *The Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern,* published eight years before, was given with such great power that McVickar was impressed with its beauty and asked, "Does Cunningham often write such?"

Scott's reply to this was, "My friend Allan is like a boy who shoots many arrows at a mark—some of them must hit." At present Cunningham was writing his *Lives of the most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors.*

Before long Columbia's professor of belles lettres and his host arrived at a point of mutual confidence enabling them to speak openly of their friends. On McVickar's mentioning Southey's despondent views of political affairs, Scott exclaimed "Ah, Southey is a retired bookish man," but as he said it Prof Mac felt Scott was little aware how much the past had blinded his own eyes. Again, when McVickar spoke of how agreeably surprised he was in Jeffrey's character, having formerly regarded him as a cold and cynical critic, Scott replied with warmth, "You never did man more injustice; his heart is all tenderness."

On another occasion McVickar, remembering the dash of superstition which Scott invariably introduced into his fictions, asked him whether he had in the course of his life met with any phenomena which could not be rationally explained, Scott answered, "I cannot say that I have," and then quoted with applause Coleridge's answer to a similar question, "that he had seen too many ghosts to believe in them." His opinion of Coleridge, as he expressed it to Professor McVickar, was that "he is never ending, still beginning; could he be tied to his chair and to a water diet, he would be the greatest genius living."

"As we sat alone after dinner one evening," Prof Mac recorded, "I ventured to introduce the subject of his long *Incognito.*" Scott's reply was that his near friends always knew it, though not by acknowledgment, the secret began in caprice and was continued perhaps from other motives.

McVickar told him that in America Scott's writings had often been attributed to his brother in Canada, but Sir Walter replied with so much feeling that Prof Mac feared again to mention the name, "Ah! poor Tom [McVickar thought Scott called him], he could have written *them,* and better; he had great powers and I often urged him, but in vain he never wrote me a line."

As a matter of metaphysical interest, McVickar queried whether imagination had ever furnished him with materials not traceable to experience. Scott replied, after a moment's pause, that his characters were always drawn from nature, and many of them individual pictures but slightly altered, and gave as a typical example the original of *Oldbuck,* saying he was "an old friend of my father's whom I well remembered as a boy." And then Scott concluded with a smile, "In truth I find that I have kept the secret so long and so well as now to find some difficulty in proving my own."

Sir Walter Scott's character as a family man appealed to the McVickars. Beside the two daughters, whom they had come to know, he had a son, Walter, in the army, and another, Charles, in the foreign department, and of them he said, "I bless God that he has given me good and affectionate children." Indeed it seemed as though he had admitted the McVickar daughters into his family circle when on Monday morning, having completed his schedule of writing for about two hours before and after breakfast, Sir Walter immediately proposed to Anna and Mary McVickar a drive through his plantations and as far as Melrose.

As the professor saw him in well-worn, green hunting coat with ample flaps and pockets, a flat cloth cap and oft-used whistle pendant from his buttonhole, he was struck with how well his dress fitted the simple rural habits of the man with the large frame and manly figure. McVickar felt Scott might be taken to be "a Scottish laird of high degree and simple tastes,—one who was beginning to feel the weight of years without having lost the taste or enjoyment of the more active sports of youth." In this guise Prof Mac saw him now setting forth in his low-wheeled open barouche accompanied by the two girls and followed by his favorite staghound, given him, as he told his guests, "by Dandie Dinmont himself."

"This dog, by the by," Prof Mac wrote aunt Sally Bard in Hyde Park, "is his constant companion. At break of day he arouses his master with a gentle paw; at meals he waits behind his master's chair and not unfrequently puts his paw up on his shoulder to remind him of his presence; follows him through the day in his drives and walks; dozes at his side while he writes and completes his tour of duty by guarding him while he sleeps,—the huge dog's bed being a bearskin couch. In truth," Prof Mac added "I look upon this dog with equal respect and kindness as part and parcel of the novelist himself."

On his return from the drive, Scott came into the library and, taking from a packet of letters just received a small hard roll of parchment, tied with cord and secured by a lump of raw wax, he handed it to McVickar. It was a writ for the general election, Parliament having been dissolved by the death of George IV, and was addressed to Sir Walter Scott as high sheriff of Selkirkshire.

"Open it," he said to his guest. "It will be something to tell that a Republican dared to break the seal of a writ of the king."

Among his numerous treasures, Scott showed McVickar a gold snuffbox presented to him by the late king, George IV, with his likeness on the lid, as Scott put it, "a princely return for a little book which the king had requested of him."

John McVickar well knew how little return the author received from the printed editions of his works in America. He recalled with what alacrity the Waverley novels had been printed in New York by James Harper (whom McVickar would see occasionally in Newtown when he visited his mother's family on Long Island). In order to secure the copy coming from Scotland, Harper or one of his sons would board the packet before it was moored to the wharf. Then, with power supplied by a horse hitched to a turnstile in the basement, they would be able to have a novel such as *Peveril of the Peak* ready for publication within twenty-one hours.

On the matter of international copyright, McVickar had spoken "more seriously" to Lockhart who seemed "anxious about it." Further the professor noted, "I suggested some measures wh. he seemed inclined to adopt."

Walter Scott's reaction to this was to tell of one occasion, when he tried in vain to prevent the "bribery" of some one having access to the press. "By way of reminding the publishers in your country that they were trespassing on other's property," he said, "I sent to my printer a sheet utterly unsuitable as the conclusion to one of my novels just publishing—which sheet was immediately canceled as soon as I had reason to believe the surreptitious copy was sent off."

"Now this," said he, "I call a fair trick. But seriously," Scott continued, "I think it is but just and becoming that a common language should make common copyright, as is now the case by treaty between the Prussian and Austrian dominions."

On the second day McVickar sent for post-horses for their barouche fearing to trespass by a longer stay, but Sir Walter countermanded them, saying in his own kind manner, "You are not quite well, and I cannot part with you; besides I owe it, for it was all Lockhart's doing with his fete champetre."

Although the professor protested that the indisposition was but trifling he appreciated the kindness of his host, and in future recollections of Sir Walter Scott he commented that "the virtues of the man will come to my heart before his merits as an author." As the McVickars were saying goodbye, having visited for three days at Abbotsford, Sir Walter returned to Anna McVickar her little album in which he had written:

"To meet and part is mortal's lot,
You've seen us—pray—forget us not;
Such the farewell of Walter Scott."

CHAPTER 5

Return to London

Cambridge and a General Election . . .
Commerce and Kings

ALTHOUGH by nature not a politician himself, McVickar had long been a keen student of government and a more than interested spectator of the methods of politics and politicians. The opportunity to observe at first hand the rough and tumble of the British general election of 1830 was most welcome. His friendship with political leaders of all parties rendered the experience all the more vivid, and his sense of humor enabled him to enjoy the jostling of the crowds.

The journey from Sir Walter Scott's to London took a week. After crossing the Tweed at Coldstream, "the last town on the Scotch border," it was for the McVickars a sightseeing tour down the opposite side of England from that along which they had come north. From Newcastle, "the original region of coal & railroads," the barouche, drawn by a series of post-horses, took them comfortably enough to Durham where they stopped "but to admire its Cathedral & ancient Castle overhanging the river." [1]

At Darlington, the journal noted, "We passed the great rail road that conveys coal from Stockton—it was a curious sight to see—the great wagons loaded with coal & chained together rushing along by their own weight on an imperceptable descent, & the horse & driver riding (cheek by jowel as one may say) a car behind—they use here both Stationary & locomotive engines—the latter take 100 tons of coal from Darlington." The McVickars left "the great London road in order to take in York," where they found themselves in the midst of "a contested election for the city—noise &

tumult—colours flying, drums beating, bells pealing & crowds carousing." York Minster they admired although "still in the midst of repair" from damage by a fire, "the work of malice or insanity—it burned for 4 days." From the minster McVickar hastened to "the Hustings—& heard the popular Candidate Mr. Baynton address the Mob from the window of his Hotel,—the words *liberty, rights, purity of parliament* were the emphatic & influential words upon which he depended—the rest was nought but leather or preamble."

Continuing their way south, the McVickars were "all day in the midst of electioneering colours—blue the popular one but," McVickar declared, "orange & pink for me (ministerial & mixed)." They passed through "the richest agricultural districts to Doncaster," gathering wild flowers "& botanizing as we rode thro' the hedgerows (the pride of England)." Again they left the London road to visit "what are termed the Dukeries." In one of these parks they were "surrounded by a herd of at least 500 deer." The rich agricultural lands, although "flat & unpicturesque" interested the professor more. They entered Stanford "amid the flags of parties —passed a coach & four just overturned (thro' fright of the leaders at the parade & noises)—whence one man was taken up said by some to be killed." Two hours were spent inspecting the "seat of the Cecil family—21 show rooms, all filled with the finest paintings—(among them the bed room of Queen Elizabeth with all its garniture)."

Another detour from the London road brought them to Cambridge by Sunday. At the university, Professor McVickar had hoped to meet Adam Sedgwick, the Woodwardian professor of geology, and Christopher Wordsworth, the master of Trinity, to whom his poet-brother had given McVickar an introduction. Unfortunately, however, the colleges they found "now deserted in the long vacation—Mr. Waddington is the only one now here to whom we have letters—visits have been interchanged between us." George Waddington, a fellow of Trinity College, had traveled through Ethiopia and Greece, and was at present writing a history of the church. "Among the cleverest men at this University," McVickar noted, "Waddington is named among the first—yielding perhaps to Smyth (Prof of Mod History)." At Peterhouse, Archibald McVickar's college, Prof Mac paid a "very agreeable visit to the Master, old Barnes—& another to Mrs. Veasey who remembered Arch."

John McVickar noted in his journal many details about the Cambridge system of education. "The State of scholarship in the university is high," he wrote, "& the discipline by the introduction of College Examinations greatly improved." He cited a contest for the "Tripos Senior Wrangler" between two undergraduates, one the cousin and heir of the sixth duke of Devonshire and the other "a friendless young student of the name of Potts," which the latter won. Subsequently, Robert Potts won wide reputation as editor of Euclid's *Elements* and William Cavendish, the defeated candidate, became the chancellor of the university. The fairness of the competition prompted McVickar to observe, "Perhaps it is circumstances only wh. led me to give preference to Oxford." Prof Mac insisted in stopping long enough to witness the "ceremonies of the opening of the Election & had nearly paid for it by being squeezed to death in an electioneering mob." On their way out of Cambridge, they paused to pay "another short visit to the old Master of Peter House who urged us to stay for dinner." From him, however, they "first learned of the revolution in France," and without more ado they "were off" for London.

From Cambridge it was a fifty-mile drive "on the road immortalized by John Gilpin's race—dining as he had proposed to do at Edmonton, & galloping (almost as fast as he did) thro' Ware, Islington etc to town." They were disappointed in their plan "of making Mr. Wilberforce's at Highwood Hill—but hurrying then to Regent St. found Mr. Goodhue's old quarters to let—& in a few minutes were settled in them with a comfortable & refreshing cup of tea." It was with a "melancholy feeling" that they thought of this as their last day of "posting in England," and "Anna endeavoured to take a sketch of our delightful travelling Barouche as of an old friend that had contributed much to our health & enjoyment."

On their arrival from America, Eliza McVickar had insisted that her husband take his brother's advice and consult the London physician James Johnson.[2] Prof Mac now went for another checkup because "headaches still plagued him." The doctor punched his side and felt his heart and assured him that with care two months more would make him "a strong man again." [3] Later he wrote in his journal, "I see my friend Dr. Johnson is made Physician to the King—a well deserved elevation—In my opinion he is the Prince of Doctors."

McVickar's "first business" on the morning of August 3 was to drive to the city "to get money & letters,—money was not so easy, there being no exchange on Paris." He now learned that for a time the success of Charles X in the capture of Algiers (July 5) had served as a popular distraction, but that the winning of the July elections by a coalition of Liberal Monarchists and Imperialist Republicans had jeopardized his throne. This meant the McVickars' future movements—"whether the Continent or not"—were in doubt. Prof Mac decided to wait for a more peaceful turn in events, and having closed that question for a few days at least, he took a cab and went about looking up old friends.

The professor found London a different place in August from what it had been in the season, Sir Thomas Acland's family "being down in Devonshire," and Joshua Bates "also on the wing." Even Amelia Heber had departed, having married secretly the Greek knight with whom Prof Mac had practiced his French. After a "most unsatisfactory circuit" McVickar returned to find two invitations to dinner, one from the chancellor of the Exchequer and the other from Sir Robert Inglis. Since the former was first he went to Chancellor Herries' "& met a ministerial party, where the contests at home & comotions abroad brought out all the Toryism of the party—dinner splendid—nothing but silver." McVickar came away at eleven feeling that John Charles Herries was a "warm & talented Politician."

The next day was set for the election in Middlesex, which McVickar had heard referred to "in the Tory slang" of the Herries' dinner party as once having been "represented by a gentleman." Prof Mac had already accepted the invitation to witness the election proffered by his Radical acquaintance, Joseph Hume. In the course of previous conversations with this self-elected guardian of the public purse, McVickar discovered that he had also attended the London Political Economy Club some years ago and his economic doctrines seemed adopted largely from James Mill, who had brought him as a visitor. With some of these Professor McVickar agreed, especially with Hume's plans for promoting savings banks in England.

Thus it was that at eight o'clock Thursday morning a long procession of private coaches decorated with blue ribbons and oak favors appeared in Regent Street. When McVickar recognized among them "Mr. Hume's chariot drawing up to me," he noted, "I entered." Then followed a tedious journey "through crowds of men, women & children with much applause, some abuse, but no disorder," to the hustings at Old Brentford, "the county town 8 miles from London." There Hume took McVickar forward within the privileged rail, introducing him to Sir John Cam Hobhouse and other members of his committee. Hobhouse, who was soon to become secretary of war, particularly interested McVickar because as Lord Byron's executor he had advised the destruction of the poet's *Memoirs.* Sir Walter Scott's reference to "poor Byron" still haunted McVickar's mind. Their conversation was interrupted by the loud cheering which announced the arrival of the other Radical candidate, John Byng. McVickar looked forward to meeting this hero of Waterloo who was many years later to be raised to the rank of field-marshal.

But the election was delayed three hours "in a hot sun," awaiting the Sheriff, Sir James Richardson. He had gone down with the new king, William IV, on his first visit to the Tower. On his arrival, McVickar heard read the usual acts against bribery, etc. The electors were then addressed by Lord John Russell and others. Joseph Hume and John Byng being the only names proposed, and "no opposition appearing (contrary to expectation) without any viva voce voting or even show of hands, they were declared by the sheriff the elected members for Middlesex."

Although Hume had refused the offer of his electors to take the horses from his carriage and draw it themselves to the hustings, he did allow himself to be *chaired* on leaving the stand and was borne aloft on their shoulders through the excited multitude. But Prof

Mac, who had mingled with the crowd to see what was happening, complained, "I paid dear for my curiosity, for as I gazed upon the scene with something of a republican's contempt, my pockets were skillfully turned inside out, my purse gone, everything except my watch." After this he made his own way back to his family, with whom he drove out to dine at Battersea Rise. Here "the native kindness—the quiet cheerful Religious habits" of Sir Robert Inglis' household "in delightful union with everything of accomplishment, fortune & rank" struck him as a contrast to the "fashion & extravagance of New York."

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It was not enough for McVickar to study the principles of political economy. He must investigate the actual operations of commerce and banking. He must mingle with constituents as well as candidates properly to comprehend the legislative assemblies. In considering international relations it was enlightening to hear firsthand that the king of England would himself have been a rebel in the cause for which the American colonies had revolted.

Friday evening, August 6, at half past six John McVickar drove to Joseph Hume's house in Bryanston Square, where an elaborate dinner of about fifteen covers was served to the leaders of Hume's party. McVickar sat between "John Byng who proved to be a gentlemanly old man, forty years a member for Middlesex, and Colonel Jones, natural son of the late Lord Lansdowne." In short, he had a most agreeable and spirited evening. He was able to resume his conversation with Cam Hobhouse, and among other guests were the high sheriff, Sir John Ellis, and Sir Francis Burdett, the M.P. for Westminster.[4]

The latter, who had married the daughter of the enormously rich banker Thomas Coutts, had been a storm center ever since he proposed the exclusion from Parliament of the Reverend John Horne Tooke, whose bust McVickar had seen at Chantrey's. McVickar recalled hearing that as a result of his violent behavior in Parliament, Francis Burdett had been sent to the Tower of London, but he was evidently again an active political figure, materially supporting the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities and other parliamentary reforms.

In McVickar's opinion Sir Francis was not "the beau ideal of a great man—he is pleasant but by no means powerful in conversation." He did tell the professor of Samuel Rogers, who had once hoped to rival Byron, and Tom Moore, who was now editing Byron's works. These and other literary men had often been Burdett's guests in St. James's Square. As the professor talked with the "tall and thin" politician, he noted his "feeble features, a high, narrow, bulging forehead and small, gray, twinkling eyes." McVickar questioned him on the expense of contested elections and learned that three Middlesex elections and two consequent examinations had cost Burdett near £100,000 or half a million dollars. "Hence in hard times," Sir Francis added, "contested elections are rare."

McVickar found that Burdett knew the James Morrison to whom Robert Southey had given him a letter, "& was able to direct me." With added interest in a man who was said to have revolutionized the retail business, McVickar set off after breakfast the following morning to find him. On his way, at the suggestion of Cam Hobhouse he stopped at the palace, "Leaving my card for the King's son," whom he had met at the printing establishment. Also on his way to the city, he called again at St. Paul's Deanery on his economist friend, Edward Copleston.

With the thought of applying the new idea of retail trade to the economy of America, where articles were still being sold for the most part from storehouses or from ships along the waterfront, the professor of political economy recorded his visit as follows: "Found my way at length to Mr. Morrison's great establishment in the Cripplegate—he was absent being down at St. Ives (Devonshire)—for wh. he has been returned MP.—His Partner was very attentive in shewing & explaining everything—Ten years ago it was a moderate retail shop—Now it is a place of sale for silks & cloths wh. brings in 2 or 3 million dollars annually—It consists of suites of Rooms each appropriated to its partic. object, as cotton stockings—silk etc, each has its own set of clerks & head Clerk who superintends & is responsible, making a daily report of sales etc.—160 Clerks are thus employed, they live in the Establishment—having their various parlours etc with a common library for their amusement & improvement."

McVickar then took up the matter of the department store's financial operation, which he had understood was on the basis of cash accounts, and "on asking the Partner he told me—that it was grounded upon *Short credit,* rapid conversion of Capital—& minute subdivision of labour & *perfect fidelity* in prices & every night every account is written up—this has enabled them to sell for small profits—get ahead of competitors," and McVickar added in his own mind, "is now bringing in a shopkeeper to sit with Princes." Joseph Hume later told McVickar of a few others who followed Morrison's example "& with proportionate success—one of them inferior in wealth to Mr. Morrison returned to the tax gatherers 11 Carriages & 21 pleasure horses."

Eager to make the most of the time left and to learn more about British banking practices, Professor McVickar noted that evening, "We all walked up to Mr. Bates," for Joshua Bates had himself been forced to postpone his trip to the continent. McVickar broached the subject of a possible "market for Bills in America wh. he had almost laughed at when I spoke of it two months ago." The professor was delighted to find, "after reading my pamphlet on *Reexchange with New York* he now says he begins to change his mind, that since then they have bought a number & he believes that with a little arrangement it would grow up & be attended with many conveniences."

On his visits to Baring Brothers Bank in the city, McVickar had been much impressed with the "quietness or rather silence of their counting room." Bates' reaction to this was that "a single word spoken among the Clerks" would indicate that someone had neglected his duty since there was otherwise "no necessity for speaking." He then went on to explain their organization. It was the duty of one of the partners to be at the countinghouse "at ½ past nine every eveng.—all the letters recd. are laid before him—read by him & notes made—each being numbered—say 1 to 50, —they then pass into the hands of the corresponding clerks of whom they have 5, 2 English, 1 French etc etc—each takes out those relating to his own business—entering in their mem. books when to be answered etc.—the letters then pass to the underwriting Clerk, the Sale Clerk etc,—each taking out his own directions & filing upon the wire of the corresponding Clerk—whatever is done in relation to their part of the business—Then they proceed—each in his department & all done by writing." Thus, Bates concluded his explanation, "if there is any speaking there is something wrong." In some cases McVickar understood the system required "a Clerk who sleeps all day & writes up the books during the night, so that all is ready by business hours in the morng."

The following day was Sunday, August 8, and John McVickar was asked by Wilmot Horton to join a group of his fellow political economists at his "seat, Sudbury Park near Richmond." This, Prof Mac felt, was "too far for a Sunday diversion." Instead the McVickars attended service in Westminster, where the professor decided the choral service "finely accords with the solemnity of the old pile." After service they "strolled thro' St. James' Park" and reaching the palace "paid our way" into the Royal chapel, which was completely hung with black cloth, "walls & every part." A small choir sang the anthem "delightfully (not like ours with a crash—but the organ scarcely heard)—the Royal family were mostly absent. The King was said to be at Windsor."

It occurred to McVickar that the new king might recall both his uncle Sackett Moore, who had been asked to serve as midshipman with him on Admiral Howe's flagship, and the fist fight between the two boys under the apple tree on Long Island that had first led to their friendship. He was more than pleased therefore to receive at breakfast the next morning "a note from the Palace from Col Fitz Clarence (son of the King) saying he wd. be happy to see me any time from 12 to 4." The colonel was the eldest of the ten children born to the actress Dorothea Jordan (now buried in St. Cloud), mistress to the then duke of Clarence. He was considered the king's favorite and Cam Hobhouse had spoken of him as the "founder, Patron & most active member of the Asiatic Translation Socy." McVickar recalled his published *Journal of a Route across India and through Egypt to England in 1817–1818,* when as Warren Hasting's aide-de-camp he had brought news of peace after the Mahratta war. The invitation was an honor not to be declined. So, notwithstanding the hurry of a last day in London, Prof Mac determined to call.

On reaching the Horse Guards, of which Fitz-clarence was at the time adjutant general, McVickar was told that orders had been left for his reception. "In five minutes," Prof Mac declared, "to give you an idea of his cordial reception and open manners, I found myself engaged as with an old friend. One bond at least was clear, his feelings toward my home and country."

"I would have been a rebel myself for the cause of representation," so Fitz-clarence summed up the situation. "My father thinks so, and so do I." Respect and kindness towards the United States were in all that he said or repeated of his father, the king, "the sailor king," as he himself admitted, adding in a tone of familiar confidence, "I am very anxious to get him down into the country. London is not the place for him now among his old associates." For the present, his host told McVickar, he was residing with his royal father "to take care of him."

McVickar said they "sat near an hour" discussing "taxation & representation, the Rotton boroughs, the French King etc," until he came to believe the royal scion was "rather more of a Reformer than myself." As they parted Fitz-clarence gave McVickar "a letter to Paris—& begged to give an introduction to him of any friend coming from America." The interview made Prof Mac wish for England's sake that he instead of his "imbecile father" had been in the line of succession.

There were other important calls on this last day. First, to the Dutch minister to learn the state of Brussels "(wh. the papers described as unquiet)—he laughed at my fears & bade me go in confidence." The professor then hastened with certain promised information to Joseph Hume, who was leaving for Scotland. Finally, with the family he drove to their "old friend Mrs. Galt," whose husband, they learned, had just "given up in a pet his situation as Editor of the Cornhill." All this had to be crowded in with the necessary shopping for the trip.

On their return to Regent Street they found one of the professor's Columbia students, "young Cutting." Soon afterwards Sir Robert Inglis came in, and later "Mrs. Livingston & her daughter," also from New York. The McVickars and their friends were speculating on their "mode of haul" on the continent when Inglis settled the problem "by offering us his haulling Barouche at Ostend, to leave at Calais on our return." [5] A final hour was spent at the American minister's, where McVickar noted Louis McLane spoke of John Charles Herries as a "master of all questions that come up & a perfect man of business," and of George Gordon, the earl of Aberdeen, who had been made secretary of state in the Duke of Wellington's cabinet two years ago, "as a highly honorable man, single minded but slow." (It was later in the Peel cabinet that Aberdeen crowned his term at the Foreign Office with the Oregon Treaty.)

Wordsworth's criticism of Wellington's dictatorial manner had so impressed the professor that he was surprised to find McLane thought of the great duke as "the most candid, satisfactory diplomat he had ever met; patient in listening, courteous in manner, seeking information, and when his judgement was settled, clear, liberal and decided in stating it. 'Now, Mr. McLane,' he would often say to me in such discussions," the American minister quoted to McVickar, " 'I do not understand that matter. Explain it to me. Up to such a point we are agreed. There we begin to differ. You hold that course, I think this view best; now then explain,' etc." The result was that Louis McLane felt the prime minister "never left in any doubt as to his opinion on any controverted question, nor as to how far we agreed, and where and how we differed." Professor McVickar gathered that what was particularly distressing Wellington at that moment was the threatened ascendency of Russia over Turkey.

For the present, however, McVickar's own concern was with his proposed visit to France. From Paris on August 8 the Marquis de Lafayette had answered a letter from General Morgan Lewis announcing the arrival of his friends by saying, "I had contemplated to write, when a most impudent attack upon what remained of liberty in France roused the Parisians to arms. What part my good fortune & popular confidence has enabled me to act you will find in the papers.

"Our victory has been complete. It has appeared to us Republicans that, every circumstance considered, the establishment of what may be called Republican Monarchy was the best guarantee we could give to the liberties of the people. Duke d'Orleans has accepted the crown from national voice. My keeping the situation of commander-in-chief of the French National Guards will place me in Paris."

McVickar was expecting to see Lafayette in France but the wisdom of a trip to that country still was doubtful. He mentioned to Louis McLane that the Dutch minister had seen no hindrance to European travel and when the American minister endorsed this opinion, the professor resolved to go. And so it was that McVickar's journal recorded "good night to England: Henceforth Germany—or France or Switzerland," any of which, he observed, "if you feel with me will be a change for the worse."

CHAPTER 6

New Governments in Old Countries

Revolutionary Flanders with Coach and Six . . .
The Rhine Valley

Now the McVickars faced the prospect of travel in countries in which they would be foreigners in every sense. In Britain, the common language and traditions had put them at their ease, but in Holland and Prussia there would be a language barrier. Here, the professor began to realize, the foreign churches had a liturgical language all their own, and foreign universities practices which took a lot of understanding. McVickar seems to have been a remarkably tolerant man for his time—always intent in searching for good in environments foreign to his nature and upbringing, and at the same time ready to declare his loyalty to his own church and country. Perhaps for this reason he found himself called upon to interpret America to his hosts. Revolution leading to the establishment of a prosperous democracy constituted the popular continental image of what had happened across the Atlantic. In a Europe fermenting with similar impulses, the Americans were made most welcome—though the McVickars' introductions were to the representatives of the old as well as the coming order.

It was the morning of Professor John McVickar's forty-fourth birthday that with Eliza Bard and their two daughters he "embarked at the Town Stairs—boarding by a wherry the East of Liverpool Steamer for Ostend." Their passage across the channel in this old and small boat with "two small cabins for 60 passengers—4 carriages lumbering the deck, & wet weather driving us all below" was a rough one. In the crowded quarters "Lord Oxford (an amusing specimine of titled Epicurianism) & all the other Hon. males &

females were mixed in a very plebian style with the equally sick untitled passengers." The professor and his ladies "took possession of a corner of the gentlemen's cabin & made ourselves as we have generally done pretty comfortable."

Daylight brought them into smooth water, and when the tide permitted they "crossed the bar—& moored at the Pier at Ostend," which was just then becoming known as a watering-place. Their first experience in a foreign-speaking country made them conscious of being surrounded by strange faces and sounds, but the customhouse, "our dread," as Prof Mac called it, "gave us no trouble. The revolution in Paris had converted all into Republicans, and the very name of *American* was sacred in their ears." [1]

Upon inquiry they found Sir Robert Inglis' barouche was awaiting them at Brussels. Thus they engaged a comfortable carriage with a driver, and crossing "bridges innumerable over every canal" they left the ocean and dykes behind and entered a flat country of "rich farms." They dined at Bruges, "once the Capital of Europe & still full of baronial grandure." At dinner they enjoyed a "table d'hote—a most agreeable party—having met with our Steam boat companions—the Hon. Mr. Howard—Lord Poke, his son in law, & their party—with two sons of Lord Erskine going to join their Father at Vienna where he is resident Minister." McVickar had first heard of David Montague Erskine when he had come to the United States in the years 1806 to 1809 as minister plenipotentiary. From Bruges they all proceeded to Ghent, "a still more magnificent City," where the Anglo-American peace had been signed fifteen years before and where soon after a college had been founded which was now a recognized university.

"Breakfast was scarcely finished," the professor noted, "when Mr. Cornelissen of the University of Ghent, to whom I had sent a letter of introduction the eveng before, was announced. He immediately planned our day for us." The carriage brought them to a college building with a Corinthian portico completed four years ago by Roelandt. As they walked on through a covered court and handsome vestibule to the rotunda capable of containing one thousand and seven hundred persons, McVickar could not help observing, "the splendid building & its collections the result of six years surpasses all the U.S. have made in a century—such is the value of royal patronage & rich endowments."

Its present number of students, he learned, was five hundred. Fortunately this was "the day of commencement" which was to start at three that afternoon. In the meantime, the McVickars made their way to the tenth century cathedral. They entered during a celebration of High Mass which impressed the professor with the "awe & solemn feelings from external things—the rich paintings—varied sculpture—the splendid dresses & Impressive ceremonial." Yet, long as the service was, McVickar noted, "they quitted it unsatiated." The diverse expressions of art which adorned the cathedral seemed harmonized by the great liturgical drama of the Mass into a meaningful whole. At the conclusion of the ritual, somewhat tired perhaps, they nevertheless proceeded to the picture gallery of "Baron Stumb—whose collection is the elite of Flanders." But art enthusiast that he was, Prof Mac found the unrelated hanging of paintings somewhat overwhelming, and was forced to admit that "pictures—especially collections weary me."

By three o'clock they were back again at the university to witness the commencement exercises. McVickar noted the "great pomp in the quasi presence of majesty," as with a flourish of trumpets the rewards were declared and medals of honor hung round the necks of the successful students who "kneeled to receive them at the hands of the president of the university." The professor recorded that the ceremony created "great excitement with much applause, but no irregularity."

After a drive through the public grounds they visited "the Grand Beguinage de Ste Elisabeth" which had been spared in the many political storms since its foundation in 1242. There at vespers they saw "700 kneeling figures," their blue robes and white linen headgear dimly outlined by the evening light and a few lamps. What was even more impressive to McVickar was the economic efficiency of an institution where, he noted, "they employ themselves in all kinds of needle work, especially lace—& take the poor children of the city to teach them the same." Nor was there lacking an essential human quality.

"I heard as hearty a laugh from the lady abbess, or Grande

Dame, as they called her," Prof Mac recorded, "in answer to some simple question of mine, as I ever heard—." He was informed that the sisters took no vows and might "quit at any time they please." Nevertheless, his guide assured him that in her own case she was not likely to do so as she was happier than a queen. "For queens," she said, "sometimes have to flee their homes, as the Queen of France the other day."

As the McVickars drove on from Ghent early the next morning, the professor observed "the country still continued cultivated like a garden—roads paved—with frequent avenues of stately elms, bass wood or Plane trees—I thought England the perfection of agriculture but it yields far to the husbandry of Flanders—where there is not a stone to distract the plough—& not a single foot of ground without its appropriate cultivation—There are no fences here & few hedges—yet not a blade of grass goes to waste—since you see little boys (down to very infancy) thro' the whole day pasturing a cow on the narrow ledges of grass or in the dry ditches which line the road—holding these quiet animals by a short rope—others you see not so agreeably employed with baskets gathering manure from the roads—This is carried home & prepared for use but not as with us—their manure being generally sprinkled over the ground in a liquid form—& such is the effect of the whole system that you see the richest blackest soil on fields where it is evident by the adjoining roads that there is naturally nothing but a dead sand."

At first the Belgians appeared to McVickar both by nature and habit a happy contented people: "they work moderately—live comfortably & look healthy & longlived." Toward evening he observed "the men in their picturesque caps and large silver buckles playing at quoits on the dry smoothshaven green or with their favorite pipe and pot of ale under the shade of some great tree at the door of a temperate quiet alehouse." Meanwhile, the women "at such an hour appeared in their best gold earrings, rich lace caps & fringed cloaks & hoods—spinning or knitting just outside their doors with children always in groups of 8 or 10—engaged in play, or work so light they make play of it."

The journal recorded everything in Flanders as "picturesque

—except the surface of the ground—Houses have always grouped irregular forms that please the eye by their projection & shadows & excite curiosity by their numerous & intricate parts—the horses are all like Vandyke's war horses—hollow backs, crested necks & full limbed—with sweeping tails touching the ground & manes oftentimes as long." McVickar was amused at his *cocher* stopping every few miles to give his horses "half a dozen slices of a brown loaf." However, it gave the professor the welcome opportunity of talking with the people along the roadside. From one "intelligent young tradesman" he learned that the "taxes pressed heavy (no business without patent or privilege) & the feeling was strong that it was all to pay the King of Holland, their new sovereign & that they wd. be better without one." The professor endeavored to make him "more content with his condition" but soon discovered the feeling "too strong & universal" to be dispelled with argument. The previous November a general petition for redress of grievances had been presented by a combination of Catholics and Liberals, only to be rejected by the King of the Netherlands.

They entered Brussels in the early afternoon and immediately the professor dispatched his letter of introduction "from the Chev: Huygent to M. le Baron de Willeus (Mayor or Commandant of the City)." At the table d'hote dinner which all agreed was "too tempting for a *dietarian*," Prof Mac was aware that in the general conversation "not a word was uttered but upon war & revolution (& military manoeuvers)." Notwithstanding, the McVickars went their way, visiting the palaces of the king and the prince of Orange "(the former excelling all we have yet seen of royalty except the new apartments at Windsor)" and inspecting the botanic garden "of recent establishment but beautifully arranged & with magnificent conservatories."

The professor then went on to investigate the economic conditions connected with the "manufacture of lace—in wh. one half (or ¾) of the poor women of the City are employed—it is a labour tedious beyond conception—& melancholy when you see such unremitting industry so poorly paid—1 fr. a day for 12 hours labour—& that after 8 years apprenticeship to learn the trade, & all this with no subsequent provision makes it painful in the extreme." It was with the more interest, therefore, he went further to inspect the "great Hospice or rather Alms House where 700 aged poor live in a state of comfort not to say luxury in their own palace & upon their own funds (it being richly endowed for that purpose)." However the professor might disagree with such a solution of the economic problem, he admitted "the order, neatness & comfort in this Establishment are beyond all praise."

In the great market square the McVickars admired the profusion of flowers "& buying of fine fruit, apricots & plumbs." There they entered the Hotel de Ville and were "directed to the Court of Marriage (this is a ceremony wh. in the Netherlands is altogether a civil contract)." They stopped long enough to witness "the form in two couples" and for Prof Mac to have a "Private conversation with the officer" on the general procedure. From thence they went to "the seat of Public Institutions," where they were most interested in the Academy of Natural History. In another quarter of the same building where the Royal Academy held its exhibition, McVickar commented on "some splendid but many more poor pictures—the style of portrait being very stiff—the landscapes minute & highly finished & rather hard—among the heads we recognized one friend, Sir W. Scott—I made some endeavour to purchase it but from the rules of the exhibition could not."

In another portion of this group of buildings, formerly known as the Orange Palace, the professor visited an exhibition of works of art and manufacture. His journal noted "they occupy 3 stories with 3 suites of rooms & consist of the perfection of everything made in the country from steam engines down to Brussels lace—among the most splendid were the wedding presents, toilet etc prepared by the King for the princess his daughter in her approaching marriage with a Prince of Prussia." There were regulations of "Ingangs & Mitgangs," but the men in scarlet liveries "always at hand to *set* you right & *keep* you so" McVickar found "remarkably courteous—so long as there is no transgression of rules—but when there is, the precision & the decision with wh. orders are given remind you you are under a Kingly government.

Their orders sound rather harsh to Republican ears—but they must be obeyed & that *instanter*."

It was now Sunday, and the McVickars were delighted to find that "the European Ambassador has the use for part of the day of the Church of the Augustines where his Chaplain preaches." Since the English service was not to start until noon, the professor and his ladies went to the cathedral beforehand to witness for the second time a service of High Mass. They counted themselves "fortunate in seeing it in all its splendor—This being the feast of Notre Dame—the streets are all dressed out accordingly with branches of green & the Churches with orange & myrtle trees that mingle richly but strangely with the pageant of Romish Ceremonies."

McVickar's journal went on to state, "No spectacle I ever beheld on the stage or elsewhere came up to the imposing character of that seen by us today—& a spectacle it is & nothing more—the orchestra was full of all manner of instruments & with a deep toned organ swelled thro' the long aisles & vastness of the immense pile—retired chapels—clouds of incense arose till it spread throughout the building—alternate music & chanting arose responsive from the most distant ends of the Cathedral—the long perspective thro' endless columns & arches—the moving lights & torches—the rich & varied dresses of the priests & the crowd of kneeling or prostrate worshippers—all conspired to make it a scene of great peace as well as novelty—It terminated by the high procession wh. might have been one of ancient Heathen Rome for its apparent idolatry as well as splendor—From this we passed to our own ritual service."

Around the altar where the English service was held—as around the twenty other altars in the church—were "votive offerings in wax of the parts of the body on wh. cures were effected." McVickar considered the service "well read—but the sermon was one of the *cast iron* stamp (to use a comparison of Mrs. Hemans) cold & heavy without scriptural doctrine & consequently without comfort—Except in the ascription at the close I do not think there was the slightest use of the name of our Saviour or allusion to his atonement." Nevertheless, the professor observed that this was the second time since quitting home that he and the others felt for their liturgy an attachment they did not recognize until they compared it with services in other churches. The first, he said, was when returning from "the fanaticism & familiarity of the Scotch Church wh. despises all externals—the second is now when returning from one of mere externals & almost idolatrous ceremony." Although he had little patience for what he considered the "vain mummeries" of the Roman Catholic services, he admitted they had "often much appearance of heartfelt reverence & often deep contrition among the worshippers."

It was evident to McVickar that "Belgium has grown rich under Dutch rule," and he was disappointed that in Brussels they had not as yet established a university. With the royal band playing in the *Place* directly beneath the large-paned windows of their hotel there seemed "outward quiet," but Professor McVickar had now good reason to be aware of the "hidden discontent" and resolved "the example of Paris will not long be lost upon them." Here he was not wrong, since in another two weeks a revolution was to arouse the populace to the point of declaring themselves an independent Kingdom of Belgium.

The equipage of Sir Robert Inglis, in which the republican visitors from America now "rattled out of Brussels," made no compromise with the unsettled times. "This was our first appearance in our borrowed splendor," Prof Mac wrote home to New York, where such display had not been seen since George Washington's coach amazed Broadway after his inauguration. "Our carriage is of Russian form though probably Paris built, covered or open at pleasure, capacious and comfortable, with cushions and stuffings." It had innumerable pockets at the sides and nettings above. The "boot" for their luggage at the back had an additional opening from within for convenience and safety.

To this vehicle, McVickar went on to say, were harnessed four post-horses, and at times six, all governed by a single postboy "with more gold & scarlet about him than belongs to a general." His seat was on the off-wheeler, governing the leaders by reins "& by the crack of his far sounding whip." His jackboots half-way up his thighs, his great spurs rattling "like the bells on the horses who jingle along dressed out also with innumerable scarlet tassels. Amid this display the postilion stands chief,—the dashing military gentleman is in fact an officer of government."

On iron tires and steel springs they drove through "the most majestic woods of the Continent—the trees rise out of a rich soil & run up to the height of I should suppose 100 feet (in a dense mass—not more than 8 or 10 feet separate at the farthest) —they are chiefly birch—& show from their regularity at least in the borders of the forest that they are a plantation—from this you emerge suddenly upon the Church at Waterloo—the field of battle lying about 2 miles farther on." They paused to survey the points of interest from the "summit of *Leon de fu*." Here they heard the narratives often told by those who had themselves been on the spot during the defeat of Napoleon fifteen years before, which made McVickar feel "much more than he expected on a field of battle not his own."

Their course now took them from Namur to Huy along the banks of the Meuse "& on the best & only Macadamized roads we have met with in the Netherlands—the fields full of harvestors —men, women & children sometimes 50 in a single field—down to the youngest that can pick up a straw—& I never saw a happier looking people—They all seem on a level—last Eveng. as we changed horses we came upon one of their rural fêtes—music & dancing on the green—not lads & lassies only, but of all ages— & apparently all ranks—some evidently by their dress being of superior class—the labouring class of the Netherlands take work very moderately & mix it with much more of recreation than any country I have yet seen—I would fain hope their happiness arises from their goodness—The cities are not so pleasing—a union of filth & splendor—& roguery enough no doubt."

* * *

The trip through the valley of the Rhine offered more than historic ruins to be explored. As an economist and an amateur horticulturist, McVickar was interested in the valley's agriculture. As a student of government, he noted with a mixture of wonder and concern the effect on the populace of a policy which emphasized above all the development of military power. But most of all, he was eager to learn something of the German system of advanced education which was attracting considerable attention in America.

At Huy, where Peter the Hermit lay buried in his abbey, the McVickars crossed the Meuse and rode through a "richly wooded & highly cultivated country" toward the Prussian border. Along the way vineyards began to appear, but Prof Mac protested, "if these are fair specimins, vine clad hills are more beautiful in poetry than in landscape—They look at a little distance like a scanty crop of Indian corn—the are trained to stand about 5 feet high (but are very far from covering the ground, so that as a crop they have a stunted look)." After showing credentials at both the Dutch and Prussian customs barriers "a few hundred yards" apart, the party drove on toward Aix la Chapelle, where McVickar observed, the "Prussian eagle everywhere displayed—on Flags, & helmeted caps, painted on Inn signs & sculptured upon Royal obelisks as mile stones, reminded us that we were in the dominion of the Frederics." [2]

In Aix they were modestly accommodated at an inn of lofty pretensions, *le Grand Empereure*. Here the McVickars enjoyed "all the discomforts of a German Inn, where carpets are unknown —& Rooms of the size of Barns—& in which you have gilding & stucco instead of warmth & comfort." When they could see their way to "dry walking," they looked about the town and decided "this ancient Imperial city has fallen from its ancient state, the birth & burial place of Charlemagne, & once ranking next to Rome in splendor." The day was cold, and the visitors were not so much impressed by the varied marble of the imperial bath as appreciative of the natural warmth of the hot springs "wh. rise beneath keeping the floor & walls of a most delightful temperature." They found themselves surrounded by strangers from all quarters, "the Russian in his furs, Italian, French & English—the dinner is a grand ceremonial of half a dozen complete courses, (or as it seems to us ½ a doz dinners united in one)—the only meal apparently at wh. anything is eaten."

By ten o'clock Friday morning the McVickars were off on a twelve-mile drive to Cologne. The hilly road soon became "flat & uninteresting—Comfort, neatness & rural wealth we have left behind us in the Netherlands—Whether the fault be in the people or the govt. there is a great change—decay & poverty mark the houses even in the midst of rich vineyards & crops of grain." The end of the journey was rewarded with comfortable "bed chambers—being the first that has had a carpet on the floor." Here with their "coach & cicerone" the professor took his ladies on "the grand tour of the wonders of this ancient seat of Roman power." The portal of the State House he found "of the time of Augustus Caesar & the inscriptions, bas reliefs & other ornaments are very perfect—& I gazed at them (being the first Roman monument that has met my view) with a feeling of awe no modern building has ever excited." Then there was in St. Peter's Church the "Chef d'oevre of Rubens," turning on a pivot so as to show on the back the copy made from memory by a Cologne artist "when the painting was purloined by the French." The Cathedral they saw as "a magnificent but unfinished monument of the wealth, skill & splendid piety of the Romish church."

They hurried through "one or two more Churches & collections" in their eagerness to see the famous Rhine, and they soon found themselves, to the professor's surprise, "on a dead level with it—I had thought we were on high ground." He went on to decribe it as "a noble river—it is here at the distance of _____ miles from its mouth larger than the Hudson at Albany & is navigated by Steamboats above 100 miles farther." As they drove up the west bank, McVickar's enthusiasm for the scenery of "hill, rock & precipice & ruined castles" increased. The vines in the meadows and on the hillsides he still felt were "not half so beautiful in appearance as our Indian corn—the dry poles rising above them make them look like fields of pole beans—being planted about as far apart." But what concerned him even more —and here he became the questioning economist—was that "notwithstanding all this richness & fertility, the houses continue as wretched & the villages as filthy as before—a great population, however, is supported by its produce—as scarcely a mile passes without a large Village on one or the other bank of the river,—with all this population I see no provision for education—nothing like a school house have I seen in Prussia & scarcely one I may say on the continent—Another displeasing change is the labour of females—we see at least five women at work for one man—& that at the most laborious occupations & in the worst weather—The men all with a pipe in their mouth or hand—for some cause or other—the women never."

On a succeeding page of his diary Professor McVickar noted, "I have today something to add to my journal & much to retract—Finding my host this morng. very intelligent & communicative, I mentioned to him the apparent want of schools—he smiled & said it was the very reverse—that all were educated, the poor at the public expense—& added that a child could not be found in that town of 8 years old who could not both read & write—To satisfy me he took me to the Schools—where I saw & conversed with the teachers—& examined exercises of the scholars—teachers themselves are examined every two months—Music is taught the very youngest & finest—hence the national taste—Botany is also studied—cards hung round the school room with coloured representations of all the native poisonous plants of the country."

Much as the professor was delighted to discover this evidence of education, he was not a little shocked at his guide's statement of the underlying principle. "Law," said his host, "overrules paternal neglect. No man has a right to throw firebrands into the community, and such is every ignorant, vicious youth. Education is therefore a matter of police."

After breakfast at Andernach, where they had spent Saturday night in company with a Prussian prince and suite, the McVickars set off on the road to Coblentz. About midway they came to the *Corps d' Armée* which the prince commanded, and since it was Sunday the professor accepted the prince's invitation to stop for their service. McVickar recorded it as "a solemn and novel sight, the white tents & flags spread over a noble plain running down to the Rhine—with the picturesque surrounding scenery was very impressive—Still more the congregation—10,000 troops under arms, listening to a single preacher uncovering their heads in prayer at the same moment, or pealing forth in one of Luther's grand hymns to the sound of trumpets, clarions & drums—"

Following the service on August 22, they dined with the officers of the Royal Guards who had come on from Berlin to inspect the troops, "with one of whom," McVickar noted, "I had much conversation on the Subject." The dinner was what Prof Mac was coming to know as a truly "German affair," six courses and almost as many hours with music to fill up the intervals. In contrast was the poor fare of the soldiers in the camp—"one meal in twenty four hours," the officers did not mind telling their visitor, and that "a slim one; his pay five groschen, two retained for his rations, and his bread to be bought beside." This show of military dominance was further brought to McVickar's attention as they neared Coblenz, where they were "amazed at the immense fortifications wh. surround & overhang it." Here they visited the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein "considered second only to Gibraltar" commanding the confluence of two rivers, "the Moselle connected with the city by a stone bridge and the Rhine by a bridge of boats wh. is removed in winter." From the fortifications McVickar could count "30 towns & villages as you look around."

From his talks with the officers in the fort, McVickar gathered that "Prussia, next to Russia, has at present the largest military establishment in Europe, nominally 350,000, actually 140,000, and that from a population of but twelve millions." This McVickar considered unsound from the point of view of maintaining a balanced economy, since it placed a disproportionate burden of military expenditure on the population, especially along the Rhine. Indeed, he heard complaints here that the new Prussian rulers exacted three times more in taxes than had the former French administration. It was only fifteen years since the Congress of Vienna had reshaped the state of Prussia, assigning to it the northern part of Saxony, all Westphalia, and the Rhineland. Two-fifths of the current population of Prussia had been acquired in this way. Although Frederick William III of Prussia had promised his people a united diet, McVickar observed that "he has not found it convenient to give one."

In and about Coblenz all seemed to be military music and parades. The Prussian drill appeared to McVickar unquestionably "the perfection of mechanical movement." The professor was concerned, however, as to the effect of this regimentation on the spiritual development of the individual recruits and wondered whether it was "equally favorable to the higher elements of the soldier." There was no question in his mind but that "Prussia lives on the reputation of it and seeks to rise again into a first-rate military power." Thus forty years before the Franco-Prussian conflict, McVickar pointed out that "its policy is essentially preparation for war." Its military system even then was so effective that within ten days, he was informed, the whole military population of the kingdom could be equipped, armed, and brought into the field.

The McVickars' glittering equipage now carried them up the Rhine valley over an "excellent road running thro' the highest cultivation without a fence or hedge, ripe plums, apricots & pears—& as cheap as they are good." The grapevine, "richer in growth than we have before seen them," flourished in the mere debris of slate where nothing else would seem to grow. They slept at Bingen-on-the-Rhine and the next day continued on to Heidelberg. McVickar planned to take particular care to investigate the German system of advanced education because it was beginning to influence American colleges. The University of Heidelberg, although the oldest in the German realm, had been so badly damaged by the Thirty Years War that for a century and a half it had struggled for mere existence. Professor McVickar knew that it had been raised anew and reconstituted while he was still an undergraduate at Columbia, and he wanted to see the result.

Arriving about noon, McVickar proceeded immediately to deliver his letter of introduction to Professor Frederick Schlosser of the university and one of its most eminent teachers. "Not finding him at home," McVickar wrote, "I groped my way in German to the university and into the great hall where a dignitary from his lofty cathedral was trying the competency of a '*Professeur Supplementaire*' in the department of History." When it was over McVickar, to his surprise, found the examiner to be Professor Schlosser. Although Schlosser with whom he passed the greater part of the day was polite and friendly, the Columbia Professor received the impression that "professors hold themselves high in this university on the score of liberal principles, looking with contempt on Austria and all its schools."

He noted that in no lecture room were there more than twenty-five students, seated at forms shabbily arranged and scribbled over with names and pictures chiefly of college duels, etc. When the professor entered, the students neither rose from their seats nor showed any mark of respect. The German professor, however, stood reading from notes and laying down very slowly and distinctly the general propositions of his lecture, which he then proceeded to unfold and prove. The outline each student took down verbatim, to the rest he listened and took notes.

"In no room," McVickar said, "did I see idleness or irregularity but constant attention and perfect silence, and this," he felt, was "not the result of discipline, of which there was none,—no roll-call, no examination not even for a degree, except one, and that not academic but by government officials."

The degree, he was told, "was a legal requisite in every profession and for that end valued, but still out of eight hundred Heidelberg students not one tenth take it, the rest receiving merely a certificate from such individual professors as the student selects." Schlosser informed him that the number of professors with salaries in value from fifty to two thousand dollars was about thirty-five with some twenty-five *supplemental* teachers in addition. When Prof Mac rejoined the ladies toward the end of the day he declared, "I still prefer the English system, and I have seen nothing yet to rival Oxford."

McVickar had hoped to find at Heidelberg Friedrich von Schlegel, who with his brother had been a leader in the Romantic school, but the answer to his inquiry was, "Ah, il est mort—he is gone to Austria." However, his brother August Wilhelm von Schlegel, who had contributed to Schiller's periodicals and traveled with Madame de Stael, was now finishing the third volume of his *Indische Bibliothek* at Bonn, and to him McVickar had been furnished with a letter through Niebuhr, the historian. Georg Barthold Niebuhr was himself at Bonn completing his three-volume *Roman History,* and McVickar looked forward to an interesting conference if they should return that way. Unfortunately, the course of their itinerary prevented this meeting.

The coach found easy going as they drove south because the roads were all excellent, macadamized, made or making, with heaps of the ready-made material at the side. "The name of *Macadam,*" Prof Mac observed, "bids fair to rival that of Napoleon here."

The state of Baden, into which they had now come, the largest and best governed of the small principalities, was obviously prospering. McVickar gave as an example the villages, "which in Prussia are cramped and filthy, are here neat, open and picturesque. The peasantry are not only comfortable but rich, the land divided and worked by the owners." The land of Baden in the Black Forest, with the fastness of the last of its robber heroes frowning from a summit in the Hartz Mountains, and "an old American friend, the pumpkin, showing his yellow face amid the corn," had its romantic appeal for Prof Mac. What concerned him more, however, was the political experiment which was going on there, for although Baden had joined the German Federation fifteen years ago, it had since 1818 been governed under a liberal constitution somewhat along American lines, with two chambers having power over legislation and taxation.

As far as the professor could see, the revolution in France was having no repercussions here, the people being content under the liberal rule of Leopold, first grand duke of the Hochberg line. This was the more surprising, as McVickar expressed it, since "the reigning family is Protestant, but the peasantry generally of the Romish faith."

The Saturday the McVickars' coach-and-six chanced to roll into Baden was the king's birthday. "He holds court at Baden and crowns the day with a grand ball," they were told. Of course they stayed to see the enormous public rooms and unlimited circles of waltzers and musicians. The desperate scenes of gambling, however, were altogether new to McVickar, and as an economist as well as a parson he felt "something awful in the aspect of the players and the dread silence which prevailed with every eye fixed on the turn of chance, the various heaps of gold on the table waiting the decision and above all the rapidity with which the croupier with his long-handled rake every few moments swept the whole into some unseen pocket."

Here he saw peasants and princes freely mixed and, "to my surprise," he wrote, "among them our new courier in full suit of black who stepped up to the table alongside of Prince Lichtenstein and laid down upon it a piece of gold." Then turning to Prof Mac, he remarked, "Master, that is for you." Needless to say his master was "startled into propriety and quitted the rooms."

The great banquet was to him more interesting than usual. After a long conversation with his German neighbor at the table, Columbia's professor of political economy discovered, "I was conversing with an author and brother professor, Dr. Rotteck, Professor of natural and political law in the university of Freiburg." Beyond him at the table sat Tieck, the Walter Scott of Germany. McVickar was familiar with Johann Ludwig Tieck's last historical novel, *Dichterleben,* and found he was planning to continue the series of short stories which had already won him wide popularity. After much interesting conversation with the German poet, novelist, and critic, they parted promising to meet again in Switzerland.

After an early breakfast at Kehl, Prof Mac engaged a carriage for Strasbourg, crossing the Rhine on its famous bridge of boats. This was their first experience in the territory of revolutionary France, "all bristling with war and scarce a window without its little red, white & blue flag." The tricolor cockade in every cap "from the peasant at his work in the fields to the dirty gamin in the streets," brought to Prof Mac's mind the Federalist cockade he and Alexander Hamilton's son had worn as undergraduates at Columbia, but now he merely trusted to declaring, "Je suis Americain."

Under this protection he made his way at once to the university which had been founded on the famous academy of John Sturm. It interested McVickar because Sturm's method of teaching had through the Jesuits become the basis of public school instruction in England. The university had been suppressed during the French Revolution, and the Roman Catholics were still allowed to discharge spiritual duties only, which left the institution with what John McVickar called its solitary Protestant theology. And, he observed dryly, "Professor Hepp on whom I called, received me with all the information I desired."

On his return to their inn, he noticed his courier wearing the cross of the Legion of Honor which Napoleon, under whom he fought at Waterloo, had himself given him and which up to this time he had worn secretly. With such a distinguished conductor the McVickar equipage rattled south to Freiburg, stopping while the party paid its respects to the university where three centuries ago Erasmus had originated the tradition of liberal learning—and so on to Switzerland.

CHAPTER 7

Switzerland

The Pestalozzis and Hubers . . . St. Bernard's Hospice and the Geneva Club

SWITZERLAND proved particularly rewarding for McVickar's investigation of educational methods—for here was to be found the origin of the "kindergarten" with its methods for effective teaching of the very young. The professor was later to adapt some of the principles he learned in Switzerland to the Sunday schools he developed in New York. But not only did he learn, he also taught—explaining to his hosts how a horse could be more easily shoed, a bridge more sturdily built, in the American way.

In Switzerland McVickar hoped to meet the pioneers of the new system of elementary education and to study their methods. The originators of the kindergarten were Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whose complete works had been published four years earlier, and his junior colleague, Friedrich Froebel, whose *Education of Man* had appeared in the same year. Therefore, at the capital of the Swiss canton of Zurich, McVickar was delighted when "the brothers Pestalozzi so famous for their schools called on us and accompanied us to the chief points of interest in and about the city. How I envy such old cities in their contiguity to the retirement and beauty of the country," he reflected, "unknown to our ever-building, never-finished towns." [1] Nevertheless, Zurich had been restless during the past sixteen years since adopting their cantonal constitution, because of the unequal representation between town and country districts. The Pestalozzi brothers informed McVickar that popular demand was that year abolishing this inequality and reforming the entire school system so that they hoped in the near future to have a Hochschule and eventually a cantonal university.

John McVickar found that in Switzerland, as elsewhere, Napoleon's rule was now considered to have been a blessing, and the loss of it lamented. "Their great national evil was want of power in their confederation," he observed. The "pacification of Napoleon" corrected this for a time, seemingly, but now "all sensible Swiss felt the want," and were vainly seeking a remedy. "To help them to it," McVickar recorded, "I pressed in conversation our revolutionary experience." With no conception of the question the United States was to face in another thirty years, he formulated it as "the futility of our old *Confederation* and the blessings of our present *Union*." So he left the Pestalozzi brothers, urging them to continue their practice "that amid all their indoor labors, they find time for daily country walks."

Later McVickar learned that the Pestalozzi school had begun as a voluntary, free orphanage taking care of those deprived of parents by the French invasion of the canton of Unterwalden. Here the Pestalozzis developed and tried out a new system of teaching *things,* rather than *words.* The success of their experiment attracted scholars from all over Europe. As time went on, the teachers discovered, so McVickar was informed, that the system was most effective with the very young "but failed when languages were to be taught, and sciences founded upon languages and symbolic signs; so that from the school came forth many good citizens but no superior men."

On Sunday, September 4, they had traveled south and were now on the top of the Righi, "their loaded *chalet* like a boat rocking amid the howlings of the Alpine storm." There followed a week of invigorating experience among scenic beauties in the environs of Luzern, from whence continuing southward they arrived at the lake, Brienzersee.

As they were leaving Interlaken in a boat engaged for their party, barouche and all, they were joined by two Swiss of the regiment that had suffered most in the late *three days* at Paris and were now returning to their homes at Meyringen. They told the American professor, "When a summons of surrender had been sent our commander, count de Salis, he had ordered the messenger thrown from the third story window." The result was that through the fury of the populace their regiment had been literally cut to pieces in a massacre of fifteen hundred. McVickar was only too glad to help these poor survivors to their home, having seen in the past few days how thoroughly the Swiss were a home-loving people.

In the course of their "rather long voyage" on the Lake of Thun, McVickar talked with the courier who, in spite of his sentiments for Napoleon and his pride in his Napoleonic decoration, was now enjoying the patronage of Metternich, on whose recommendation McVickar had engaged his services. Prince Metternich, Prof Mac was told, was of small stature, quick temper, yet mild. He had suffered much from domestic misfortune. Wife and children all gone, according to the courier, "he is left alone and busies himself in the turmoils of a busy official life." Prof Mac learned later that although this prince of the Austrian Empire had lost his first family and his second wife (to whom he had not been too faithful) the latter had left him a son. Moreover, the renewed outbursts of revolutionary activity amidst which the McVickars now found themselves were provoking a revival of Metternich's system, originally instituted to maintain the settlement made by the Congress of Vienna. As the courier said, the Austrian chancellor was once again becoming the chief diplomatic figure in Europe and an arbiter in the affairs of the continent. Nevertheless, from his American point of view McVickar saw Metternich as "still thinking in the outmoded terms of the 18th century when *states rights* seemed more important than *national union.*"

The equipage safely ashore again, they drove northward to Berne. Near there the McVickars visited Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg, who had developed at the Hofwyl estate an educational system for welding the higher and lower orders of the country into closer union on the basis of agriculture. McVickar could not judge to what extent the pupils accepted the theory of von Fellenberg, but it was evident they were benefiting by an excellent study of agriculture combined with high moral training. The cost of the free school (to Prof Mac's mind a large one), was more than met by the labor of the scholars, while the pay school was sustained by its foreign students, chiefly from England and Prussia. "Its chief influence," McVickar's journal noted, "is on character, encouraging independence up near to the limit of insubordination. Vocal music is much looked to for its moral and moderating power." McVickar came away with the impression that von Fellenberg "though marked by ready talent and great ingenuity of means, was less attractive than the benevolent Pestalozzi" who had worked in conjunction with him for some time.

In Berne itself, the citizens were planning (as had those of Zurich) to develop the gymnasium into a university; so the professor from New York began to feel that his own native city was not so far behind in the field of advanced education. Nearby at Giez the McVickars enjoyed a reminder of New York; the ancient mansion in which they were received with a warmth of kindness Prof Mac felt "beyond all claim," was the homestead of the DeRhams. Henry Casimir DeRham, the husband of McVickar's cousin Marie Théresa Moore, whom they had last seen in London, was a scion of this Swiss family, and the professor's cousin, Benjamin Moore, was now a partner in the New York banking firm of DeRham, Iselin, and Moore. Thus the McVickars were welcomed in the DeRham's home as members of the family. The house itself Prof Mac described as "extensive and irregular while the grounds, beautiful by nature, had been improved in English taste." It commanded a perfect panorama of Alps from the Righi to Mont Blanc.

Among the highly interesting neighbors who joined them at various times were the family of François Huber, and when the day came for leaving their hospitable friends they were accompanied by the DeRhams "to Mr. Huber's where we had promised a parting call." They found the Hubers busy preparing "some little memorials" for the American visitors. McVickar recorded in some detail his talk with the younger Huber "on the subject of his bees & ants—the work on the former is by his father (François Huber) who still lives—he was blind when he wrote it—having lost his sight at the age of 25 after commencing his observations." Upon McVickar inquiring how François Huber had carried on the now famous experiments with his glass-sided observatory hive, the son informed him that his father made his subsequent observations "thro' the eyes of a faithful domestic & written down by his wife."

As for the son, Prof Mac found him "a man of great simplicity of manner & character—talented & enthusiastic but, abandoning every pursuit as soon as difficulties cease to arouse him, he has failed to attain celebrity in any." McVickar inquired of the DeRhams "as to the facts recorded in his Essays," and received the reply that "his Imagination was as undoubted as his veracity." Nevertheless, when the professor put the question to Huber as to which he considered the wisest, the bees or the ants, he said, "Equally wise as their instincts were equally fitted to their condition but that he found the condition of the ants much more analagous to the State of Man—In the instinct of the bees there was a *finesse*. wh. went beyond us as in their govt. etc—but that the ants seemed the perfection of human society—It was the government of order—each held his place according to the gift of nature but that it was selfgovernment—he could discover no rule—no orders issued etc," in short, Huber concluded, "the model of a perfect republic." However that might be, McVickar came away more impressed with the movable comb-hive the Hubers had invented—its wooden frames opening for inspection like the leaves of a book—and appreciated its economic value in the honey industry of Switzerland.

On their way south toward Lausanne at a village where they had stopped to rest their horses, Prof Mac recorded, "I wandered to a Blacksmith's shop, & took great pains & I hope successfully to teach him to shoe a horse, American fashion—Their mode requires two men—& is both less skillful & less expeditious." He had also noticed how the Swiss wooden bridges were limited by the length of a single timber. He therefore suggested a recent American patent of "Triangulation" of timbers as giving stiffness and almost unlimited length to a bridge. The usual reaction to these American suggestions, he soon discovered, was that "they first doubted, then admired, but finally ended with preferring their own fashion."

About three o'clock they came in sight of Lausanne, "the quiet extended lake at its feet." Here McVickar sent off his "letters & cards—one to Mr. Budez the other to Mr. Koch—son of the Banker at Frankfort." The result was the McVickars were greeted "with great warmth saying they had expected us for two months." With the former they went to the "Archery Club where we found gentlemen shooting with the Swiss bow once so formidable in the hands of their ancestors—their ground is a beautiful terrace overhanging the lake, planted with trees etc." This custom of uniting "pleasant recreation with business" Prof Mac considered in America "the point in wh. I think we are most wanting."

By five o'clock the next morning the McVickars set out "in a Swiss voiture, having despatched our own to Geneva," where they planned to meet it again in the course of the next week. The intervening time was to be employed "in a ramble thro' the Alps of La Vallois & the Savoy." He described the Corniche hills along the margin of Lac Léman, "the placid lake—the mists of the morng.—the dark rocks—the towns & villages along its borders with a rising sun gradually gilding all in turn—made it on the whole the most splendid drive we have had in Europe." While stopping for breakfast, Prof Mac met "Mr. Sampson, my Banker of London" and enjoyed "a basket of delicious grapes—the first fruits of the vineyards of Vevey." He described in detail their cultivation of the vine and sent his notes back to America, advising, "We must pursue this course—more vines & less exhaustion."

They drove on to Bex, where at the table d'hote they were amused by an Italian count "or rather by his page who it was very evident was a female in disguise." Here they decided to inspect the nearby salt industry. This "mine du Bunillet," McVickar noted, "has been opened above a century—with 2 guides & a miner & each carrying a lamp we entered a level gallery in the side of the mountain." After some time they came to "a large cavern—perhaps 150 feet in diameter—with an immense central column of rock supporting it, the centre was covered with water." They were then about a mile below the surface.

McVickar was a little disappointed to discover that "the rock salt is almost black & without splendor" but he took care to note the method of refining it. "They blow it out with gun powder—The melting & purifying of the salt is carried on below—The saturated water is pumped up to the top of a lofty open building above 300 feet long, where it is made to perculate thro' immense piles of white wh. retain the calcumus deposite—while the pure salt water trickles by drops into the basin below—this is again pumped into vats & chrystalized by heat." The professor had heard his father-in-law Samuel Bard tell of his efforts to extract salt from marshes on the New Jersey coast, and was well aware of the economic importance of the industry.

It was only a short ride further which brought them to the pass of St. Maurice. Here they crossed "the *arising Rhone* by a noble stone arch" and watched the river "bounding down from the mountains with the speed of a race horse" until it passed beneath them in a "dingy white colour." Here also their passports were examined, since they were now entering "Savoy the dominions of the king of Sardinia—tho' we again soon after quitted them for the Canton of Les Vallois." It was dusk before they arrived at Martigny.

* * *

If the professor was put out because his practical suggestions on horseshoeing and bridge building were indifferently received, he was soon to be mollified by success in another quarter—and that most unexpected. To the monks of St. Bernard, McVickar proposed a new and economical way of heating their hospice—an innovation which, according to Fenimore Cooper, changed their whole mode of life. Proceeding to Geneva, the professor made an equally effective impression on the lively circle of political economists there. So much so that the Geneva Council entrusted the American with the task of conveying Switzerland's official recognition of the new French government to Lafayette. Engineer, political economist, and for a brief period diplomatic envoy, McVickar enthusiastically seized every opportunity for new experience and adventure.

The McVickars had planned to drive on south to Chamonix, but on coming previously to a road that branched off to the Great St. Bernard, Prof Mac said, "the temptation was too great to be resisted—the guides gave their word there would be no rain—wh. opinion agreeing with our inclinations," they hired the necessary mules and set off. On the way up they passed "a mass of rock & sands under wh. a village lay entombed," and other proofs of Alpine perils. Two Jesuits coming down with a party of students told them that "on Monday last two young Englishmen perished on the mountain beyond caught in one of the violent snow storms." The morning was "clear & warm as Spring—but by the time we reached the halfway village, Liddes, it had clouded over & began to rain." They crossed a "perilous looking" bridge and made their way along a road cut through rock "a thousand feet above our head." [2]

As their road became more Alpine the weather became "more alarming, rain came down in torrents—at length the thunder began to rebellow among the mountains with vivid flashes of lightening—here we passed thro' the last possible resting place—tho' without an Inn—It was a hard choice—if we stopped, we must stay, as we had no time to lose—Filth overbalanced fear, so we passed on—fortunately our cloaks were thick & our umbrellas did not quite carry us off our mules—& at length with grateful hearts we espied the Hospice—I dismounted at what I thought a very short distance below it, but could scarcely reach it—my breathing was so much affected by the rarified air." They had been nine hours on their mules without resting.

The monks of the hospice "who supped with us are the Prieur Claushal the Head of the Community here—the other is a young middleaged man of most prepossessing manners & conversation." McVickar found a bond in their mutual friendship with the DeRhams and Sir Robert Inglis. Also Sir Robert's adopted daughter, Lucy Thornton, with whom McVickar had discussed early church music, had for some years corresponded with the monks of St. Bernard on the same subject.

The next morning they awakened to a "terrible snow storm—the dogs & men have been out thro' the morng. & every ½ hour they come in with half frozen travellers generally peasants." It was now Sunday, September 19, and at half past four in the morning, McVickar recorded, "we were awakened by the matin bell." In freezing temperature they hastily dressed and groped their way guided by chanting voices through the long dark corridors until they reached the chapel door. On opening the door they found themselves "alone in the gallery of a small but beautiful chapel richly adorned and brilliantly lighted. The music of the organ and choir, the resplendent vestments of the celebrant, —all contributed to form a scene as of magic in those frozen solitudes."

"Not neglecting our own devotions," the professor noted, "we again attended high mass at ten o'clock and vespers at five." The intermediate time was spent chiefly in the museum, where Prof Mac's eye lighted on a specimen from the neighborhood apparently of "an inferior quality" of anthracite coal.

It was the year after John McVickar graduated from Columbia that his father, as a director of the Western and Northwestern Coal Company, had speculated in the new fuel. Although the intervening quarter century had seen comparatively little advance in its use, McVickar's experience with the comfort derived from the steady heat of a coal stove was such that he could recommend it to his hosts. The monks, however, "were ignorant of the method of burning it." Their only source of heat was a scanty supply of little sticks from the valley. Therefore Prof Mac lost no time "in examining their fire places & giving them drawings & plans for grates & stoves for Anthracite—wh. they will immediately make—If they succeed as I have no doubt, it will double their comfort & almost their revenue—the wood being an immense expense." After his return to America the professor shipped the monks a cast iron stove invented by his friend Eliphalet Nott for burning coal. Piece by piece the stove was carried up the mountain and assembled in the hospice with great success.

When the weather cleared, the McVickars made their descent, "accompanied by our kind host," forced to walk because of the "steepness & slipperiness of the peak." Their conductor told them that the pass of Bernard was by far the highest & most difficult and that it was only "a mule pass—all the others are carriage roads." Along the way the priest indicated historic marks showing where conquerors from the Romans to Napoleon had led their armies. He left them after dinner at Liddes and they continued on, retracing their steps to Martigny. From a little further on they took the road to Chamonix, as they had first planned, "& ascended a narrow windy valley, full of chestnut & madrica scent trees." At the chalet which served as a halfway house they were joined by "3 young Englishmen whom we had before met—the young Marquis of Abercorn & his party." They became better acquainted at supper and "arranged to continue together during the rest of our time in Switzerland."

One of the undergraduates named Sanders, a Fellow of Christ Church Oxford, was "an intimate friend of the Aclands, and during a "terrible storm of rain & now snow" he and Prof Mac had "much talk about Oxford & some new information," which the professor carefully recorded. The third young man, "their incidental companion," was Henry John Rose, a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and a brother of Hugh James Rose whom he later assisted in editing the *British Magazine of Ecclesiastical Information*. Together with the McVickars they viewed "neighbouring collections of Minerology & Nat Hist" and so the day "whiled away pleasantly."

The next morning they were "delighted in awakening to see Montblanc—clear in the grey twilight." Their plan was to continue directly to Geneva "an ordinary day & a half's ride." Soon after starting "the whole party being distributed in two large char-a-bancs," they stopped to ascend the glacier de Bionnassay, "the most picturesque of all—the novelty of the scene paid us for our toil—we were surrounded by pyramids of ice—reaching up to points sharp as needles from 20 to 100 feet in height, chasms under our feet as sharp & deep—& all of a bright translucent green." The remainder of their ride in the char-a-bancs was filled with mishaps, "One lost a wheel—soon after the other broke a spring—one horse fell down & could not rise—another lamed & could not go—still between walking & riding—laughing & talking we got on very well." Among the group McVickar found a "most agreeable & instructive companion" from Westminster School in London, from whom he learned much about the public school system in England. As they journeyed westward they took time "to dine at St. Martin's & take coffee at Bonneville."

They arrived at Geneva late on the night of Thursday, September 23. The next day at the hotel the professor mistook a fellow guest, "Prince Gallitzin of Russia," for "The Apostle of the Alleghanies," a member of the same family who had become a frontier missionary in America. The confusion eliminated, the professor and the prince had "quite a pleasant visit." Also some American friends, "Mr. & Mrs. Codman sat the afternoon with us in our bedchamber salon wh. is the only kind of private parlour the Hotel affords." Alphonse de Candolle, a son of the eminent botanist Augustin Candolle, called and introduced McVickar to "the first magistrate of Geneva—an intelligent man but a young one to be at the head of so grand a body." On Saturday McVickar had an appointment to meet the economists Sismondi and Prevost, who he had noted had been guests before him at the London Political Economy Club.

Among others in New York, McVickar's fellow Club member Albert Gallatin had given him letters to John Prevost and other economists in Geneva. The friendship between the professor of political economy and the former secretary of the United States Treasury now admitted him to a circle which he described as "at present the school of philosophic thinkers for Europe." From this highly influential civic group had gone forth in the past not only Gallatin to America, but also François Lefort to Russia, Jacques Necker to France, and Jean Jacques Rousseau to the world. And if Rousseau's opponent, Voltaire, had brought the thinking world to the nearby Chateau of Ferney, Necker's daughter, Madame de Staël, had drawn it to her exiled salon at Coppet.

It was Madame de Staël's influence that had brought back Jean Charles Leonard de Sismondi from exile in England and Italy, and encouraged him in the many-volumed *Histoire de Francais,* upon which he was still engaged. Pierre Etienne Louis Dumont had also returned to Geneva on its restoration to independence in 1814 and had become leader of its Supreme Council. While in England he had become Jeremy Bentham's official interpreter to the world at large, and in France he had contributed to Mirabeau's journal and served as ghost writer for many of the latter's political speeches. Although he had died within the past year McVickar heard the Geneva Club discussing Dumont's ideal for improving the judicial and penal systems of his native state.

At the gathering of the Geneva Club members on Saturday to meet the American professor of political economy, it appeared to McVickar that their present problem was the introduction of Dumont's penal system into France "in whose revolutionary affairs they take great interest." When McVickar "was called upon to unfold our system," as his journal recorded, he "regretted not having the details of ours, I could give them but the outline." He learned, however, "a penitentary has been erected at very great expense under the direction of Mr. Dumont the Benthamite." As the discussion proceeded, McVickar felt "abolishing the punishment of death occupies a great deal of their attention," and came away with the impression that "Geneva is at present full of zeal & benevolence—in many however a zeal not according to Knowledge." In his journal McVickar noted further that it was Pierre Prevost, the Swiss natural philosopher, who "introduced me to their Club & half persuaded me to stay over with him—a highly intelligent man & full of polite attention."

After the club meeting the botanist, Augustin Pyramus de Candolle, to whose chair of natural history in Geneva his twenty-four-year-old son was in time to succeed, volunteered to act as the McVickars' personal guide. Eliza McVickar, who accompanied them, recalled her father speaking of Candolle's lecturing on botany at Montpellier, the ancestral home of the Bards in France. It led to Candolle describing his great work of botanical classification which he termed *natural* as opposed to the Linnean artificial method.

On Sunday the professor and his ladies "took coach & drove out to Ferney" where they were entertained by the Countess Brodi and the eldest son "of the old bedridden count—Walked in a long covered arbour where Voltaire studied out his cold blooded malice —his bed chamber remains in its original state—" Then after "two hours agreeable visit—returned to Geneva—the young count taking a seat with us." Another visit after dinner to the Chateau Fontiney and then to "Mr. de Candolle's Country House two miles on the road to Lyons—Card tables were put up on our arrival—& a very pleasant eveng. spent." In the course of conversation McVickar found the present military position of Switzerland to be strong: "their militia well organized & could bring into the field 60,000 men but Mr. C. said he wd. not say how long they could maintain them."

The following day McVickar "had an appointment with Mr. Candolle to see the Professors etc, but broken up by an extra-advisory seance of the council touching the recognition of Louis Philippe." This was the *Grand Conseil,* a legislative body to which, McVickar learned, "the councillors are elected by the Deputies & are for life (260 Deputies for a population of 60,000)." To this solemn assembly the American professor was invited "by special favour," and accordingly was conducted by "a paved road winding around an inner tower for the convenience of horseback which was the official mode of ascent," to the third story of the great square building. Here he was admitted "during the Sitting while a Committee was out preparing a report, introduced to the Syndics —among others the Syndic Gallatin & le gros G." When the committee "on the recognition" returned with their report, McVickar was asked to retire. Then, his journal noted, "in a few minutes all was settled, the House concurred, Louis Philippe was acknowledged and the word was passed out,—*No war with France.*"

McVickar had been looking forward to an "Evng. party" at which he was invited to discuss with Sismondi his two volumes on political economy which Edward Everett had read and commended to Prof Mac when he was first beginning to teach the subject at Columbia, but he complained "We could not stay." It seems shortly after McVickar returned to his hotel he was called upon by "several friends, among others the Count de Sellon with dispatches to be entrusted to my care for Lafayette in Paris & for Mr. Gallatin at home." For the more speedy conveyance of this important message to France, the McVickar carriage was "fixed with shafts instead of a pole to drive three horses abreast, French fashion," and thus equipped they set out at once. As they drove along the lake "Mont Blanc & the other Glasiers lay beyond in brilliant majesty—the night came on as we turned to the Jura." Then by the light of a bright moon, over a road of "Savage solitariness," they reached the summit of the mountain range.

At this point John McVickar wrote in his journal, "A month's ramble in Switzerland made a new man of me. I know not whether by a physical or moral influence—but there was a kind of renewal of youth in that country I never felt before—it seemed as if there was no care on its mountains and nothing but peace in its valleys."

CHAPTER 8

A New King for Paris

Algiers and a French Revolution . . . Lafayette, the Deputies, and the Institute . . . Robespierre's Secretary and the Bourgeois King

THE times were scarcely ideal for a jaunt through France. The effects of the recent political upheaval were everywhere evident. Nevertheless, the professor noted carefully whatever could be seen of the economic condition of the countryside. Disappointed by the scenery, depressed by certain lacks of comfort and cleanliness, the McVickars finally arrived at a Paris that still boasted barricades. But here, as in other cities, they soon found themselves surrounded by friends. And with his usual good fortune in such matters, the professor was not long in meeting men of importance in the intellectual and political circles of France.

The first night of their dash to Paris, the McVickars "passed in the Carriage travelling post" after two hours of "vexatious & annoying examination" by the French customs officials. Their road descended "from barren hills to plains equally dull—not quitting the carriage except for a drink of water at a fountain about midnight. La belle France," the professor went on to note, "has no beauties as yet for me—Its plains are wearisome—no trees—no enclosures—no farm houses—& not very fertile (a plain of clay). Its political state contributes to give it an air of melancholy insecurity—the tricolour hangs out from every sign post—desecrates the tower of every church—the national guards in every place under arms & even the amusements of childhood are all military—You see them strutting & parading down to the child of 3 years with the tricoloured ribbon or cocade in their cap." [1]

Their third day brought the McVickar barouche among "the vines of Bourgogne covering dry hungry hills of limestone. They finally reached what the professor termed the country "of the Burgundy wine & at Dijon saw some of their finest vineyards—It differs little in its cultivation from the German—vines all low—the only crops on the ground were inferior Indian corn (blé de Turkie) & superior hemp of wh. they have large crops wh. they are now pulling—The Villages here are dirty & inns wretched—I am sitting now on a brick floor in our bed room—we had fire made, an unusual thing if we may judge by the great smoky chimney in wh. it is put & a few rags of carpet strewed on the floor—such is French comfort—we have not seen the sun since we entered it—& have been shivering with cold—In the plains of Burgundy such is French climate."

Wednesday night they spent at Vitteaux, "halfway from Geneva to Paris." This gave the professor opportunity to look into the economic condition of the country. "On enquiry," he noted, "I find land greatly divided—the people live in villages & each inhabitant has his portion—wh. is seldom parted with—Passed this afternoon the great canal of Burgundy wh. connects with Sens & thus communicates with Lyons & is to run to Paris—It was begun by the Prince Condé, resumed by Bonaparte, & is now undertaken by a Company—the coal wh. comes from the neighbourhood of Lyons, lies in heaps along its banks—it is a rich bituminous coal but mostly fine—the Canal is navigable 9 months in the year—it is now nearly dug & undergoing repairs."

It was about sunset when the McVickars drove into Auxerre on the Yonne; they were satisfied that "it redeems that character of French towns & villages wh. are horrible dirty—but no wonder, the women do the work of men—plough, drive, scatter manure in the fields—& therefore have no time for the cares of housewifry." The professor took time to look into the cathedral, where he spoke with an Urseline nun, and noted "two convents—one Urseline—who teach—the other Soeurs de la Providence who relieve the poor." McVickar had begun to notice along the road "many melancholy soldiers—& on enquiring found them to be of the gendarmerie of

Paris who for firing on the people were disarmed & sent into Exile to Corsica."

Thursday meant another night's hard driving, with the McVickars sleeping in the carriage, but as the professor now noted, "it is a Russian built barouche & intended for such journeyings—some of them have also a lamp fixed behind & lighting the carriage thro' a little window." This brought them to Fontainebleau for breakfast and enabled them to view the palace. McVickar commented on the tapestry, painting, and marble, saying it was "the most splendid Gallery I have seen in Europe." He felt the forest preserved "for the pleasures of the Chase" had not the "majesty of the English woods or German forest, the light soil of France bearing little more than the varieties of the poplar, the willow & a few very infirm hard wood trees."

The McVickars were shown the "little round stand" in the queen's anteroom where Napoleon had signed his abdication in 1814, they saw the repairs made by Louis XVIII "but not for himself," and they were told "Charles X came down to hunt—the last day he was a King—& the present Monarch is not easy enough to give himself to such indulgences." Ten minutes after the McVickars left Fontainebleau, "the workmen in marble had risen *en masse*—the national guard was out & cannon lining the streets." The professor was given to understand that "1,200,000 men are now organized & may be said to be under arms in France—we meet them & their ensigns everywhere—About ten miles from Paris we were stopped by a party of them—they only did it for enquiry, they were waiting the arrival of a load of Algiers treasure—to escort it in safety thro' the purloins of Paris—On our right we saw a dark tower rising in the woods—I found it to be Vincennes—the scene of d'Enghien's surrender & the present prison for the unfortunate Polignac."

They entered the French capital through the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, which, according to their courier, "dictates law to Paris—thro' it & the interior Boulevards we were impeded by their labours in relaying the Paris wh. they had broken up to form barriers against the military." Finally, after "4 days & 2 nights hard riding from Geneva, being 14½ posts," by eight o'clock Friday night they were established "in a suite of Rooms that elsewhere wd. be esteemed splendid" at the Hotel Brittanique in the rue de la Paix.

After a late breakfast the following morning, McVickar "took a Cabriolet with my bundle of letters & drove to my Banker's M. Delessues." Then to deliver the dispatches from Geneva he "first drove to the Marquis la Fayette—at the Etat Major—there he was not, nor at his residence nor at his son's." Nevertheless, McVickar left the dispatches and his card, noting "it is very doubtful my seeing him as he is full of business—Gen. (issimo) of 1,200,000 & all to organize—From Gen. to Duc de Broglie, who was also engaged in his Bureau—A letter from Col. Fitz-clarence shared the same fate." Finally, stopping at the American ministry with Daniel Webster's letter of introduction, McVickar found William Cabell Rives "at home & met a warm reception."

It was eleven o'clock that night before McVickar returned to his hotel suite and recorded his experience at "the soiree of Baron Fenusac who receives any Sat. Eveng the literati of Paris at his House—met many clever & many scientific men but foreign names slip away from the memory—the Baron's room was model for the reception of such a company—a lofty library, perhaps 50 feet long —with tables covered with every thing new, learned or splendid from the press of Europe—himself easy, polite & attentive to all—He is Chief Ed' of the Bulletindes Sciences Universalles—A great Association wh. is branching itself into every country & has for its object the gathering & diffusing of scientific knowledge—There are 8 actives allowed out of their limited number for the U.S.—he spoke with me about it & is to send the necessary papers." Although McVickar appreciated the honor accorded him, he came away convinced that "a French savant lives in Science—he seems to want no other food (all our refreshment was sugared water)—he seems absorbed in the particular object of his devotion."

On Sunday the McVickars were invited by Charles Stuart, who was completing his fifteenth year as British ambassador to Paris, "to attend in his Chapel." It was in the regular course a ball room "opening upon a noble corridor, festooned with the passion flower in full bloom & from that to the orangery & gardens." The appearance of Paris on Sunday seemed to the McVickars "gay but quiet—much less offensive than the low Countries or Catholic Germany—the gardens were like a brilliant moving picture, the military preponderate (at least today every third man we met I think was in uniform)—Dined at the Cafe de Paris, the best in Paris." The professor then noted in detail the working of this restaurant, its "small tables—a lady sits & presides & makes out the accounts—a tariff or book of prices—a whole page of the various potages—excellent dinners at a very moderate price." Prof Mac recorded the menu for their dinner, which cost him only 14 francs, from a dozen oysters to apple marmalade, including "a half bottle of good wine (Chablis l' quart')," saying he noted it "for the benefit of Housekeepers." After dinner they called on "Mrs. Brevoort, who was not well."

The next day McVickar "walked about 6 miles thro' some of the best & some of the worst parts of Paris—& accompanied Eliza & the girls to the milliners & then to Mrs. Rives who holds her levee on Monday." At this weekly reception of the American minister's wife, Prof Mac observed, "We met by singular coincidence 3 young Americans whom we had left in London, Van Rensaellar, Ray & Low, also Mr. Cooper." James Fenimore Cooper, as N. P. Willis then described him, "dark and corsair looking with his brows down over his eyes and his strongly lined mouth fixed in an expression of moodiness and reserve," Prof Mac referred to as "our old friend Cooper travelling in search of a revolution, though unfortunate in point of time, complaining to me that Dresden broke out the day after he left it, and Paris finished the day before he reached it."

John McVickar felt he "comforted Cooper with my fears that the volcano though quiet was still boiling within." Cooper spoke of meeting several mutual friends and acquaintances from America, including William Bard's brother-in-law, saying, "They all rush here to the movement." Washington Irving also made a hasty trip to Paris to witness the coronation of Louis Philippe.

Among McVickar's visits of more than ordinary interest was one to the duc de Broglie at his family as well as official residence. Achille Charles L. Victor de Broglie, long prominent in French politics, was now minister of education, and McVickar's letter to him was from "an intimate friend in England." The professor was ushered into the *grand salon* with sofas and work tables at one fireplace, business papers etc. at the other, and there he found the duchess "equally at home at both."

"On entering," said Prof Mac, "she rose and received me with great kindness." Albertine de Broglie possessed the literary culture McVickar associated with her mother, Madame de Staël together with the business acumen of her grandfather Necker, the famous financier. But Prof Mac felt her "softened, as her mother was not, by a christian spirit giving her character a purity and gentleness such as in French society of the present is seldom found." Among the subjects that brought out her feelings was McVickar's incidental mention of Thomas Erskine of Edinburgh, her frequent correspondent. They were in complete agreement as to his talents and in their apprehension for his deepening trials. Their "earnest talk" was soon interrupted, however, by the entrance of the duke.

McVickar described de Broglie as "about 45, of mild countenance with dark hair—His manner is not that of the old regime—it has courtesy but wants dignity, his bow is almost fawning—the air of one who feels that he floats on bladers." Professor McVickar recalled that at the Political Economy Club in London there had been signed as "Visitors—Lord Althorp, Duke de Broglie, Baron de Staël & Steuart Inglis." This was a June meeting a year after the Club's inception when Jean Baptiste Say accepted honorary membership and proposed "two questions" to the British economists. It was the same year, 1822, that Edward Everett had written McVickar that in Harvard College they had "used Say's treatise on Political Economy." McVickar looked forward to seeing Say in Paris and he was glad to find the duke shared his interest in political economy.

After de Broglie's many inquiries concerning others of "his friends in Engd. & some general conversation, a message came for him to attend the Council—he apologized & said he left me to the care of the Duchess, with her I passed half an hour very agreeably—on Scott, Cooper & their works she spoke freely & well—Her appearance & manner are ladylike & pleasing without the slightest hauture. She mingles however a good deal in the official influence of her Husband," McVickar observed without full approval. As an example of this, when the duke was leaving McVickar had expressed a casual wish to visit the Chamber of Deputies in session, not realizing that "the power of admission was very limited even to Ministers—He immediately consulted his wife & said I sd. certainly be admitted but he could not assign the day, & on my taking leave she added that she wd. send me a ticket she thought for the day after tomorrow."

Later, in speaking with the American minister McVickar mentioned the matter of attending the Chamber, and Rives told him "that last year he had a ticket wh. admitted him freely, but now he had only a note wh. was scrutinized & examined whenever he went as to make it very unpleasant." Especially now the pending trial of Prince Jules de Polignac was making the sessions "highly interesting" since he was held responsible for the government policy which resulted in the issue of the *Four Ordinances,* generally considered the immediate cause of the king's fall from power. Rives had referred to Charles X "as a perfect gentleman & a good & honest man, active for what he believed the good of his people," and when McVickar asked "if he could say as much for Polignac," the American minister had replied that the prince was "blinded but sincere—devotedly attached to Charles & honestly believing that an increase of Royal Power was essential to the peace of France, & thro' that of Europe."

William Cabell Rives advised McVickar that "Materialism is the universal creed & Atheism not an uncommon one." This led to the professor driving down to "the celebrated Cemetary Pere la Chaise, so named after the Jesuit Confessor to Louis XIV—this having been their headquarters." Prof Mac admired the tombs as "magnificent & in admirable taste—generally of Egyptian Architecture—but too crowded & too public for right feelings—Texts of Scripture as acknowledging the hope of immortality are inscribed on the entrance but few or none of the tombs—Those who fell in the recent commotions their temporary tombs were filled 1 & 2 feet deep with votive chaplets & surrounded with flags."

On his return from "the outskirts of the F. l'Antoine" McVickar passed "one of the great Abattoirs—Stopped long enough to see all the processes of this splendid, horrible, butchering place—There are 5 in Paris—This is the largest, erected as everything noble & magnificent in Paris by Bonaparte—In this between 5 & 600 head of black cattle are slaughtered daily besides calves, sheep etc—the manner is, the beast is brot to a ring by the head—& a single blow fells him—when the jugular vein is opened & what was a new process to see the nozzle of several large foot-bellows is introduced under the skin so as to blow up the creature to twice his natural size—this is to take off the skin with greater rapidity & precision—everything is carried away, & the places washed—but still I shd. not call them as clean as ours in New York—on enquiring no sickness or inconvenience was found to arise—I am not certain it wd. be as free from danger in our climate." From here the professor went on to see the Jardin des Plantes, which he felt lacked "the beautiful neatness of the Zoological gardens in London." He was particularly taken with "the Giraffe, a most splendid animal—he walks like a being of another world—his steps are upon earth—his head *inter nublia condit,*" but on the whole he was disappointed.

* * *

A soiree at the home of Lafayette, a visit to a session of the House of Deputies, and attendance at a meeting of the famed Academy of Sciences went beyond the ordinary list of tourist activities. Though the professor was able to meet people most tourists only heard about, he did not neglect the beauties of the city itself—the parks thronged with people, the Champs de Mars sporting a full dress military parade, and "the great Bazaar, & the resplendent shops of the Palais Royal." He noted on the one hand the "perfect independence" of modes of living in this city; on the other, the elegance, discipline, and aptness that marked the speeches of the deputies in the assembly. And with all these activities he found time to pay a visit to the haunt of the great chess players of Paris and in his usual way to ask some searching questions.

The McVickars dined at their hotel that night and then, as the professor put it, "to our evening engagement at the Marquis de

Lafayette's, 'le premier Homme de France.'" Fenimore Cooper had concurred in this opinion, saying that "he was universally admitted to be the most powerful man in France." McVickar arranged for himself and his daughters to be early for the soiree, "& by that means enjoyed an opportunity of more conversation with the great object of attraction—He looks younger than when in America—is 73 & yet passes thro' all the labours of an ardous office —He is a Frenchman in his politeness—in the Revolution he broke off for an hour to attend the marriage of Miss Stores to young Irving having given her his promise to be there." [2]

McVickar spoke of Lafayette's daughter-in-law and granddaughters as "pleasing women & very attentive." Among the notabilities present was the Baron Gaspar Gourgaud, of whom McVickar said, "I looked at with interest & had some conversation with." General Gourgaud, he learned, had served Napoleon as ordinance officer in 1812 and on Bonaparte's return had fought for him again as a general at Waterloo, finally sharing his exile in St. Helena. Now he had returned again to the army. There were numerous others with whom the professor conversed, and always he found "towards la Fayette there seems to be but one feeling for his firmness & his moderation in the late events—*his moderation* since had he chosen at that time to say a *Republic* for France, he would have been its first President—but he acted prudently as well as honourably." One of the men with whom Prof Mac spoke summed it up in the words, "like the Sun he is biggest in going down."

At his hotel that night McVickar found awaiting him "cards with a note from the Duchess de Broglie for the House of Deputies. So the following morning, October 7, he drove "to the Chamber, a large but not splendid building opposite to the bridge of Louis XVI—They are now engaged in repairing & enlarging it to correspond to the encreased importance of the democratic part of their constitution." He presented his ticket and "on ascending the stairs passed along a circular lobby with several doors & was admitted into one resembling a box in a theatre. It is a resemblance wh. runs throughout, the pit benches, curtains & festoon paintings on the sides & ceiling resembles exactly the interior of a second rate theatre—The tribunes or galleries gradually filled, & consisted at least one half of ladies, for whom there are appropriate Tribunes."

McVickar waited an hour before the President "took his seat—in half an hour more the benches of the Members filled—the Pres' bell rang—the ushers with their gold chains trotted about calling out *en place Messieurs* & the sitting commenced—The ministry occupy a first bench—I heard most of them in the course of the morng.—they read their speeches clear, distinct, to the point & none over 10 minutes."

Among the debates and resolutions was one for abolishing capital punishment. It recalled to McVickar's mind the discussion in Geneva but here it was doubly exciting because of its immediate bearing on the fate of the ministers of Charles X. It was introduced in an ably written speech by M. Beranger, to which "all listened with the silent attention given to a popular lecturer." But Pierre Jean de Beranger was more than a lecturer, he was a popular song writer. Copies of his *Le Vieux Drapeau* had been served out to the insurgent crowd, and Prof Mac could still hear its compelling refrain in the street; and it was Beranger who was to ask for a pension for Rouget de L'Isle, author of the *Marseillaise*. However, the speech McVickar now heard was on more critical issues—the life and death of men who only recently had ruled France hung in the balance.

After he finished, the usual great disorder prevailed and it required five or ten minutes of the president's bell to restore order. "The bell by the way," Prof Mac humorously observed, "is a poor instrument for enforcing silence & evidently annoys the president more than the member." John McVickar also deplored the necessity of a member quitting his seat and hurrying to the rostrum as awkward. Certainly this requirement to an English or American speaker would be "a great *damper,*" he considered, but not so with the Frenchman, for, as McVickar described it, "He rushes to the tribune as if bursting with enthusiasm, but on reaching it his words are calm and collected." The speeches were less passionate and more to the point than McVickar had ever heard in a popular assembly. "Nor is this because of being written," he noted, "the good sense was evidently *off hand,* the truisms & Rhetoric penned down." These political speeches, seldom more than five to fifteen minutes in length, were of special interest to the professor who had been teaching public speaking at Columbia. When it was over he declared, "I have listened for five hours without weariness to the revolutionary orators of the *three days* in Paris."

McVickar found business in Paris "a distracting thing from the great distances, the infinite & perplexing variety, & ignorance of names & niceties of expression." He was also pestered with "the pertinacity of the shop keepers—they consider a foreigner as their prey & whenever they get him in the store, so hedge him in with heaps of goods & of clerks that it is a real physical difficulty to reach the door to make his exit." To facilitate shopping the McVickars ordered prospective purchases to be sent to their hotel rooms. The professor described the result: "goods & persons at ½ past 8 o'clock & such a leveé you never saw—such splendor & variety & numbers that one anteroom—salle à manger & parlour were literally filled, breakfast came up as they began to come in, & such was their pertinacity & succession of numbers & their frequent returns with other goods if the first did not suit & that in spite of all our decision, that it was near noon before we could sit down to breakfast—I then ran out to get money from my Banker."

Social demands had to be met, so Prof Mac "took a carriage & with Anna proceeded to pay some visits—to the Count Bastard in the Rue St. Dominique—to our Minister's Rue de l'Universiteé—One last visit was to Mrs. Cooper who lives in a retired street not far from the Boulevards," and finally on returning home "found we had missed a pleasant visit from Mrs. George Washington La Fayette who had made Eliza promise to attend the leveé on Tuesday next."

On Sunday morning the professor took time to sum up his impressions of the French metropolis in the following words: "Time slips away very rapidly in Paris—it is a city of a very peculiar character, full of everything to gratify the eye & the taste—every desire but that of the heart—it seems heartless, selfish indulgence seems the ruling principal of life, & every thing that can annoy either body or mind seems put aside—There is therefore in Paris perfect independence as to modes of living—all that is demanded are proper manners in Society—that is the only point on wh. others presume to sit as Judges, when & how a person lives, in a worldly or a moral sense, is a matter utterly indifferent—The Parisians live abroad & they have many temptations to do so."

McVickar's journal went on to comment on "the cafes' Epicurean dinners at less than the price of a servant's meal with us—The weather (at least as we have had it) tempt you to be out both night & day, & the public walks & gardens almost justify the practice—The Thuilleries are not only splendid but delightful, woods & walks & orangeries & fountains & statues without end afford constant attractions—& the 100,000 chairs you see piled up for use shew the numbers that frequent them—You see carriages of the nobility always at the entrances waiting for the families walking in them—Paris is daily growing more democratic—& accomodated to those who walk instead of those who ride—Side pavements are adding to all streets that admit of it, by many families liveries are discontinued & many have laid down their carriages to avoid invidious distinction—The Royal arms are every where defaced, the cock (the new national emblem) has succeeded to the *fleur de lis*—the pedistal on the spot of the guilltine intended for the statue of Louis 16th, is converting into an altar to the spirit of the Charter & the great Sepulchral Chapel yet unfinished, erected on the site of the Opera House where the Duc de Berri was assassinated & wh. was destined to receive his remains—is now to exchange them for the remains of the citizens who fell in the late revolution."

McVickar had wandered alone through the Louvre, "that immense collection of paintings," but he was scarcely able to view the pictures for the "copyists—all at work, some on the floor, others mounted up on great stands almost to the ceiling—among them were many females, at least one half & many of them evidently lady artists—among the other sex one, ebony black, copying a St. Cecilia." Often the McVickars would spend an evening "going thro' the great Bazaar, & the resplendent shops of the Palais Royal—I say resplendent for they have adopted a new form of lamp wh. is on the outside of the windows—the light hid from the eye of the passenger but throwing a dazzling light on the goods within it."

On Sunday, owing to misdirection, the family was "rather late for church in the Hotel Marboeuf—the building was I believe the Ball room of this great Hotel—but makes a beautiful Chapel—in the form of a T lighted altogether from the roof—." After service they drove "round by the Champs de Mars where Fayette was reviewing 12,000 of the National Guard—A Frenchman is a soldier by instinct—in 3 weeks this great body (60,000) was accoutred & disciplined & ready for the field." Before returning home they left their carriage "at the entrance of the Garden of the Thuilleries (Tuileries)—by far the greater part, perhaps 30 or 40 acres (the whole is altogether 70) are in noble wood—clear below, but a dense mass of foliage above—thro' wh. long vistas open commanding a view of the most beautiful statues or Buildings—the Champs Élysées (also in rich wood) are separated but by the Place de la Revolution—& both together are capable of containing half the Population of Paris—& open to them all—The more I see of these noble arrangements in the Cities of Europe, the more *mad* I feel with the contracted policy of our citizens—It shows that in some cases at least Kings consult more the real welfare of the Public than the Public itself."

At three o'clock Monday afternoon McVickar arrived at the "Palace of the Institute" with a note of introduction from M. Delaput to M. Girard, the president. The Institute, so the professor understood, was a body composed of savants in all departments and independent of the University. It was part of a system by which Napoleon had placed "all instruction," secondary and primary, under the state. This seemed to the American professor to have been patterned after the University of the State of New York and its Board of Regents, of which Brockholst Livingston had been the first treasurer in 1784. The meeting which McVickar was now to attend was of the Academy of Sciences, one of the four divisions of the Institute. It was a special meeting to receive the German explorer Friedrich Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt on his return from the Himalayas.

McVickar was directed upstairs to the library and after a short wait was "ushered in & escorted thro' a long crowd of listeners to a chair within the inner circle of members' seats—& near the table of the Pres—The room in wh. we were met might be 80 feet by 30 with lofty ceilings & altogether of rich tho' grave architecture—The Pres sat at an oblong table in the middle of the length of the room—the table of the reading member—a short distance in front of him—& the seats of the members arranged in a double hollow square around." The paper being read was the report upon a scientific question of a previous meeting. Another followed, *On the motion of Bodies in Elastic Fluids.* A third excited a controversy with Baron Cuvier, whose five-volume edition of *Regne animal distributé de'apres son organization* was just appearing. It was a question as to "the crocodile and its anatomy—in a manner so offensive as to call for immediate rebuke." When the opposition was finished, Georges Cuvier spoke from his seat on the platform, rousing himself from "the lethargic look wh. settles upon him as his head sinks down between his shoulders, wh. is its ordinary position." He complained of the mode and measure of the attack and terminated the discussion by pledging to produce full proof of his claims at the next meeting of the Academy.

The attention of the assembly was alerted as "Humboldt now came forward with papers & books—the latter he presented to the Academy in the name of their respective authors—they contained a short summary of the results of his travels of last year in the interior of Asia under the patronage of the Empress of Russia—He is a good looking but not remarkable man," McVickar observed, "of middle size rather stout of kindly expression—round face—& bearing no other weather beaten trace than hair perfectly grey or rather almost white—He spoke with great modesty, & assigned the chief merit of whatever had been effected in his late journey to his companions C. G. Ehrenberg of Germany & Gustav Rose." The former was publishing his *Symbolae Physicae* and the latter was perfecting his systematic classifications of minerals which was to remain the standard crystallo-chemical system. Humboldt's report seemed to McVickar to correct "the exaggerated estimate of the Central Asian plateau."

This was followed by a report upon a plan to prepare movable houses on a new construction, and the concluding paper by Michel Chevalier was "on the motion of fluids passing thro' an orfice." Prof Mac found this highly interesting from the "clearness of his statements accompanied by off hand drawings on the blackboard," and noted the comments and drawings in detail. "Upon the whole," McVickar concluded, "there is a tone of higher science & greater devotion to its prosecution here than in the Royal Society at London—& the papers seem to me altogether superior—When the sitting was over—the Pres introduced me to Baron Cuvier & Humboldt—with whom especially the latter who speaks very fair English I had some conversation." He also had an opportunity to see Jean Baptiste Say, who had just published his *Cours complet d'economie politique pratique*. Although he was shortly to become professor of political economy at the College de France, McVickar was disappointed to find Say "now an old man & much broken in body & mind."

After dinner that night the professor sallied forth again with his wife to pay "our respects to the Duchess of Broglie—We found her at home as domestic with her children around her at their various studies as if she was neither Duchess nor a Prime Minister's wife—In the course of our visit the Count de Bastard came to make some communication to the Duchess relative to the Prince Polignac." From there they drove to Mrs. Thorne's, "& before eleven we were at home."

It was now Tuesday, October 12, and at ten o'clock Prof Mac "drove to the Café de la Regence where Mr. Maelzel (in New York) told me I shd. meet the great Chess players of Paris—On entering I found several chess tables occupied & on enquiry, found that at one was one of the most celebrated—an old Jew, with a clear head but trembling hand—I took my seat by him & studied his game—He opened always in the same manner, losing his King's Bishop's paun—& moving out first his King's bishop & knight immediately castled—Entering into conversation with him I mentioned the Automaton, & asked him the rank of Maelzel as a player —he answered *Il n'a point de force—c'etais moi qui jouoit ici l'Automate—Alors* said I, *Ce n'etait pas dans la boit*—His answer wh. I wished much to hear from his thick & trembling speech I lost —but understood him to say, that wd. be ridiculous—but am not certain—he offered to play a game with me today—wh. for the honor of it I told him I wd. accept if my time admitted."

* * *

Aided by introductions and his acquaintance with the duc de Broglie, the professor was able to carry on his earnest investigation of continental systems of education. What interested him most in France was the structure of the University of France and the requirements for earning advanced degrees. Whatever the professor undertook, however, he could not help but be aware of the continuing political crisis and the ominous signs that the revolution might not yet be over. But there was one more adventure in store for the American professor—a personal introduction to the new king and his family; his sponsor, the great Republican himself, Lafayette.

At his hotel McVickar received "an invitation from M. Jullien, the Chief Ed. of the Revue Encyc—to join him at his great monthly dinner today where all the literary men of Paris are assembled." Without realizing that his host was more than a prominent French publicist, McVickar accepted and "met there some of my acquaintance of the day before—M. Girard the Pres of the Academy & at the head of Civil Engineering—Geoffrey St. Hilaire who seemed a little ashamed of his angry discussion with Cuvier—etc etc—At dinner I found my name placed next to M. Jullien, & *Silk* Buckingham who was to speak in the course of the dinner—With Mr. Buckingham I had much conversation—he is the celebrated Traveller & Radical—& is come over to France to engage the Gov. or the public in his proposed voyage of benevolent discovery round the world—a wild & wandering scheme, he gave me an Esquisse of his plan—& a copy of his popular patriotic songs—the dinner was the most lively spirited public dinner I ever was at —M. Jullien is an admirable speaker, for such an occasion—Small figure, white head but a voice of that deep intonation wh. gives power & interest to every word. Buckingham spoke, & with great effect—a Poet recited an unpublished fable—The Inventor of a new telegraph gave an invitation to his experiment at the Louvre—under the patronage & in the presence of the King—The Pres gave an Invitation for Thursday for some gymnastic Exercises at the Champ de Mars, under the inspection of the Minister of War etc etc." [3]

McVickar's journal goes on to state that after the dinner "broke up about 10 P.M. Girard, Jullien & some others of wh. myself was one adjourned to the leveé of the M. la Fayette—wh. was splendidly attended. Among the company was a young Polander in the old Polish dress—wh. is extreemly rich & graceful—he looked like one of Rubens' pictures taking the air." McVickar learned that the costume was forbidden by law in Poland where a widespread revolt was brewing against Tsar Nicholas I, who had had himself crowned king in Warsaw.

It was now Wednesday the thirteenth with "so much to do & to see" and McVickar undecided whether to return via Havre or Calais. That evening "finding ourselves at dinner time (6 oclock) in the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal—we determined to try the perfection of French Cooking—wh. by all *competent* Judges, that is by all Paris, is determined to be at Very's, the Prince of Fraiteurs—We found no reason to dissent from the universal voice nor did we find it dear—except that in our dish I mistook a blind figure in the carte—& made a choice three times as expensive as I intended." Among their callers that afternoon were "M. & Made. le Bastard—His personal perils during the recent revolution give great interest to his narration of it."

The journal went on to note that "in the Eveng. young Mr. Richmond came & seemed delighted to meet a face he had known—he has been two years abroad & came from Rome to meet his Brother." He was able to inform the professor of the German universities from the student's point of view, saying, "The mode of lecturing varies in Göttingen & one other from the usual method—being all rapid & without dictation—Students write what they can." McVickar referred to stories he had heard of undergraduates "carousing thro' the night at Heidelberg" and found from Richmond's experience "that was peculiar to a German student—he could carouse all night & study all day—there he had seen such

Students—that they were all original thinkers—it was the character of the people—& that in travelling he always felt confident of interesting conversation from a German Student—for whatever errors he fell into—they were those of a thinking man."

The following morning, having arranged with "Mr. Allen to wait upon the ladies in their morng ride—& with the Painter Nuhem of sitting for Anna," the professor set off on his jaunts of inquiry. Because of the pioneering enterprise in life insurance which William Bard had just organized in New York,[4] McVickar introduced himself "to the Actuary of the only French Insurance Co. on lives—& obtained from him full information as to best work—numerous private calculations of the Company—There is but one French Co. for Insurance on lives—two others established here are but branches of English Companies—This is divided into several Bureaux of Insurance ag,—risks of all kinds—life is but one—The calculations on wh. they go are double—1. *General* of life in general in France—2. *Particular* of those engaged in different trades etc.—in estimating the risk attention is paid to both—their calculations are upon an Int. of 4 pr. cent wh. is at present about the market rate."

McVickar had hoped to spend an hour in the "Bibliotheque Royal," but finding it "shut up" he crossed the Seine to the Ecole Royale in whose salon he saw an exhibition of "the prize performances of the past year—they are principally sculptures & architectural drawings." From thence he went to "the Sorbonne—where I again introduced myself—The Sec-y. to whom I addressed myself as the official organ—turned out to be a very polite & highly intelligent Prof.—who loaded me with papers & explanations—The regular examination of the candidates for the Baccalaureate commences next week & continues for a month, but upon their compliance with certain formalities they may undergo their examination at any season—the Diploma is conferred by the Minister (Duc de Broglie) upon the certificate of the Professors & the Dean—It is a moderate sized (plain) Diploma in parchment."

As they were talking, many students came in to arrange "about their Examination." This gave McVickar full opportunity to take detailed notes on the French system of grading their scholars. He inquired as to their "strictness" in applying the system and his informer, "M. Ducq, replied it depended on circumstances—for a Teacher they were strict—if a man was of middle life & had come far—they wd. say 'tis hard etc. & let him pass—& in the Certificate is entered opposite each study *Bien, Mal, rien,* etc, etc—After taking his Baccalaureate, the Student enters his name in the register —goes thro' another year's study—& upon standing for 3 days a second & higher Examination including Latin & Greek composition, prose & verse—he receives another certificate—& is admitted Licentiate—wh. is essential to many situations, such as Prof of Colleges—Jurors etc.—immediately after this, the candidate is admitted to stand for his Doctor's degree—this requires a Philosophical Thesis written in good Latin—critically examined & after being approved, publicly maintained—this concludes their course of Academic Honours."

After noting the details in which the University of France differed from the University of the State of New York in organization and financial support, McVickar left the Sorbonne and "drove to the College Royal, in the Place Cambrai," where he hoped to find Cuvier, but he regretted, "unfortunately for me it is *vacanse*— The Ecole Royale des Mines I was fortunate in finding open— The cabinet is a splendid one it is double—one of scientific arrangement for the Students, the other local—& confined to France, arranged according to the Departments—What interested me most were the laboratories for the young Engineers—where all the processes of metalleurgy are carried on by them from the first smelting the ore, to its nicest processes."

At the dinner the previous night he had accepted an invitation from his host, and thus McVickar noted "Remembering now my engagement with M. Jullien, I drove out to the Champ de Mars— Crowds of carriages pointed out the spot, wh. was lined & guarded as usual by bayonets & sabres—On first entering—I found them exercising the lungs & muscles of the chest, thundering out the words of some martial songs—this was soon exchanged for more active exercise—a long green was the scene of repeated foot races— first in lines—then free—then following a horse running—the ordinary gymnastics then followed—the gymnasts consisting of men of the line—students from colleges & boys from schools—entering into conversation with an Officer I found that this school is at the same time a national establishment for the military & also an open Gymnasium where students may attend."

As McVickar mingled with the visitors he came across "several officers of high ranks—the Chief of the Establishment is a Col. by rank, & a Spaniard by birth—the teachers are numerous, athletic & powerful *gymnasts*." They told him that the school had been "in operation ten years." Prof Mac was amazed that there had not been during those years "any serious accident. The leaping over horses was astonishing—but the most interesting part of the exhibition was the military assault of walls & towers." These the professor described in detail, especially the last where an Algerian flag was placed on top of a thirty-foot tower, and "about 20 young men stood like grey hounds on the slip, one having a staff with the tricoloured flag, bound on his—at the roll of the drum, and the word being given *a l'assaut*—they started—& in less than 3 minutes the Algerian flag was hauled to the ground & the French flag flying in its place."

John McVickar had another appointment that afternoon at "the Café de la Regence—My Jew was not there—but I soon had pointed out to me Prof Boncour, on enquiring of what he was Prof-r. I was told of Chess, that instruction in it was his business & living & that he was the first player in Paris—I accordingly took my station by him, & subsequently played two games with him, both of wh. I lost—He stated to me that there was one abler than himself, tho' not now in Paris, M. Labourdonnais—the Old Jew was named Alexander, a good player but beginning to break—that he himself had played the automaton for a long time & never been beaten—tho' he said an equal player wd. have beaten him from the distraction caused by the mechanism—I observed to him 'not in the box then'—He answered 'others less bound by honourable engagements may tell you, I cannot—In France it is not much of a secret but in your country I suppose it is otherwise'."

An exhibition which commanded McVickar's special interest was "the Reputim des Acts & Nectien—wh. contains working models of all improvements & patents—passing thro' the hydraulic department & examining the various forms of pumps I recollected the pump of Hales—found none similar to it—& immediately drove to M. Delaput to search for it—found it in its original case." On another occasion the professor "walked to the Quai de Voltaire & spent two hours among the *Magasins des Curiosités* with wh. it is filled—paused on the Quai des Augustine wh. is devoted to Books & Prints ancient & modern."

After another conference with the duc de Broglie, who had just returned from a meeting of the Council, McVickar came away with the impression, "The Ministers have an anxious time of it—the people & the Gov-t. are opposed in relation to the fate of Polignac etc,—the Gov-t. anxious to save them—the mob of Paris prepared to rise en masse & murder them, if the Ministers take a step for their safety—not the mob only—18,000 men of the National Guard have given notice that they cannot be depended upon if the Ministry be allowed to escape—& none can be trusted in opposition to the mob of Paris—In this emergency the Chamber of Deputies afraid to pass the Bill for the abolition of death—have thrown the responsibility on the King—the Ministry dare not act—& throw it back again—so that even La Fayette acknowledges there is no chance of escape for these unfortunate men at least for Polignac & Peyronnet—whose heads must answer for the blood of the people."

De Broglie was in a position to give the professor a clear picture of the French educational system. He learned that "at the College Royal de France are given public & gratuitous lectures by 21 Professors—gen-y the most distinguished men—but their lecture rooms are now closed.—The University of France, wh. like ours had a legal but not local existence consists of 4 Classes of schools, 1. Faculties—2. Colleges—3. Institutions or Pensiers & 4. Ecoles Primaint—all of wh. are under the control of the Minister of the Interior, who is also Minister of Public Instruction—It has a *locale* at the Sorbonne where it has a library—& has also endowed funds—Here all examinations for Degrees are held—The Sorbonne is the seat also of the Academy of Paris—wh. is at the head of the University, the Rector of the academy being also Grand Master of the University—The Secretaries of the various Faculties have their

Bureaux here—There are 5 Faculties, Theology, Law, Medicine, Sciences & Letters," the last of which McVickar had visited.

The professor was particularly interested in the "*Concours* or academic contest wh. annually takes place between the best scholars of the Colleges in Paris & those of the Royal College of Versailles" and noted that in Paris "the students gen-y. live in Pensions under the direction & with the assistance of private teachers—& go every day to recite at the College—Some colleges however have Boarders—those of Louise le Grand, Henri 4, & St. Louis—the other two viz. the College de Bourbon & Charlemagne have only those who come to recite—There are also two private colleges wh. rank very high—The College Royal de France is not a school but only a place of public lecture."

On Sunday the professor and his ladies drove out to Versailles to see the palace "in all its splendor & gaiety. A review of about 20,000 by La Fayette at which the King & royal family were present, & on wh. occasion all the great water works were put in action, & at least 200 fountains sprung into the air—Taken all together—as we saw it, with its 50,000 visitants—it was the most inspiring & exciting scene I ever saw—We visited both the Grand & Petit Trianon—the latter is full of picturesque beauty—it is art but art that copies nature—all is quiet & simplicity—I have seen no where in England a more beautiful exhibition of good taste in laying out of grounds—& it shows there must be something wrong in French taste that they have had this model for near a century before their eyes without following it."

The previous night John McVickar had received at his hotel "a note from Gen'l La Fayette proposing to introduce me at the Palais Royal," and so on Sunday evening he drove with the marquis to "the Palais Royal where I was received in what we sh-d. call a cordial manner—La Fayette commands everywhere a homage wh. seems to know no bounds—the moment he was recognized, as we descended from the carriage his name was echoed by the crowd—as we passed up thro' the great Vestibules—officers & even soldiers pressed forward to address him & at the levee he divided attention with the King—as introduced by him the King received me with an air of kindness & still more it wd. seem as an American—The

Queen said to me that he always looked back with peculiar interest to his visit there."

McVickar went on to describe the royal family as he first saw them. "The King speaks English passably well—as do all his family—It is, one of them said, a family accomplishment—He is very like his portraits, full large features—& a kind good-humoured expression—The Queen is tall—rather pretty—with a very amiable look & manner—Mad-e Orleans,—the King's unmarried sister, is also very pleasing without beauty—I persuaded her to try her English wh. she had forgotten—& told her she must cultivate it as a bond of friendship between the two countries—The young Princess whom La Fayette described as both beautiful & agreeable was unwell & not present—The sons were—the eldest the Duke of Orleans, a young man of 21, is as pleasing & intelligent & modest withal as one can meet with in any station of life—On La Fayette's introduction—he addressed me in French—wh. I answered in English knowing that he spoke it perfectly well—wh. he does—his education has been a plain good one—& his sentiments are manly & liberal—France has much to hope in him—The appearance & manners of the whole family bear a domestic simple character—wh. from all I have heard I believe truly belongs to them."

This personal introduction to the ruling family of France by George Washington's friend who had so materially helped in the American revolution was a memorable experience for John McVickar, and then "after about an hour's conversation—a small private door was opened thro' wh. they retired—& after some time finding the King did not return wh. he generally does—an inferior Officer of the Guard whom I had before noticed again addressed La Fayette with some expression of attachment—La Fayette turning to me said 'This is the Officer who refused to arrest Manuel' —he then called & introduced him with wh. he seemed greatly pleased—especially when I told him I was an American & had heard of it there." The fame of the Revolutionary writer Louis Pierre Manuel had spread to America, but, as McVickar knew, this one-time defender of Robespierre had eventually been arrested and guillotined shortly before the latter's death.

As Lafayette and McVickar departed from the King's levee together, outside the palace was "quite in tumult—the next night a mob of 6 or 8000 attempted to fire the Palace of the Luxemburg & were only prevented by the doors being thrown open & being satisfied that the Ministers were not there—they set out for Vincennes where the Prisoners still are but fell off from their purpose —the daily conversation I had with my cabriolet men who are a numerous & intelligent body of men has satisfied me that Paris is on the brink of another tumultuary movement—all this made me resolve to hasten from Paris."

Late Tuesday afternoon, "just at lamp lighting," they started from their hotel on the rue de la Paix. "We passed the Barriers with mingled feelings for we (especially I left much unseen I had wished to see)—changed horses at St. Deny—& posted till about 11 oclock when we stopped the night at Poix." The next day was one of "steady riding—& fearful of being late at Calais, prepared to post thro' the night—but the want of a courier forced me to be awake at every Post—A serious accident had well nigh befallen us—about midnight descending a hill the Lienouise or shaft in wh. the centre horse goes, gave way—we repaired it in the dark with chain & chords—& so drove thro' the night with great caution & examination at every Post." Since they were driving with three horses abreast the centre one "in shafts" was the only one which could hold the carriage back.

It was Thursday morning before they "drove thro' Boulonge, reaching Calais about ½ past 4." For some time they were "thrown into despair by the double intelligence that the Steam Boat had burst her Boiler that eveng. & that only two cases had arrived for me by the Diligence." Nevertheless, these difficulties were surmounted, and the McVickars left their "comfortable carriage at the Hotel Destine Calais agreeably to Sir R. Inglis' request," grateful for the use of this barouche, which had carried them through more than seventy days of excitement on the continent.

About midnight McVickar and his three ladies "got on board & took possession of our most uncomfortable births." Among their ship's companions was a family returning from France, "wh. they had made their home, driven away by coming troubles—These I am satisfied are coming thick on Paris—The English, who were a support to thousands are all coming away—Commerce is prostrated—confidence at an end—heavy failures already taken place & as one of my Cabriolet men said 'What is left? Misery.'—Among the heavy failures are M. Vassal a great Banker & leading member of the Chamber of Deputies, M. Robinson & Co. an English House in whose hands the benevolent funds for the English were placed, & the great Manufacturer Terneaux."

When the McVickars found themselves moored opposite the English customhouse the next afternoon, the improbability of securing "a Steam boat ferry" soon became apparent, "for miles below London the river is so chocked with vessels that it is altogether impossible." However, with the aid of their friend "Capt Sebu coming off to us," they were able to land and take coach for lodgings again in Regent Street. There they discovered their rooms were "with our usual good luck just opposite to Mr. Brevoort," Prof Mac's friend and fellow Club member from New York.

CHAPTER 9

Final Farewell to London

ARRIVED from revolutionary Paris, the McVickars found that England too was rife with political unrest. During the last part of their trip abroad, the professor hastened to see once more as many of their new friends as were available and to enjoy for the last time the stimulating company of members of the Political Economy Club. When finally the time came to bid farewell to the Old World, he could reflect on all that he had seen and learned. It had been a most successful trip, for not only had McVickar secured for himself recognition as one of the leading exponents of political economy, but he had also come to know many of the greatest men of his day, men of government, scholars, scientists, churchmen, and writers. Although increasing responsibilities were to keep him in America, he never lost touch with his overseas friends, retaining contact through correspondence and mutual friends.

Once more in London, the McVickars endeavored to renew their former contacts but found "most of our friends out of town," except for Lady Buller, who asked Prof Mac's eldest daughter to be bridesmaid at her daughter's wedding. On Sunday they attended service at "St. George's Hanover Square—where we heard an excellent sermon & the Bans of Marriage published of Anna's friend Miss Buller." [1]

The following day the professor had "an appointment with Mr. Senior to breakfast with him at St. James Square, Windham Club house—the only one among these aristocratic establishments wh. admits strangers—& that only as guests—to this particular one many of the first nobility belong—Lord Nugent to whom I was introduced at the Athenaeum is their Steward." Thus through

Nassau William Senior again McVickar found himself in the midst of the members of the London Political Economy Club. His journal noted that although "we had breakfast at ½ past 9, Mr. S. & I did not separate till one—After quitting the Club House—we went to Mr. Villiers, nephew of Lord Clarendon's, whom he wished to invite to meet us at dinner on Thursday."

McVickar hoped to enlist his friends' influence "to get me out of the confounded scrape I have got in at the Customs House in bringing over so many things from France—These I had hoped to transfer to our ship without entering into Eng-d." The government was changing, however, following Wellington's refusal to accept responsibility for the Reform Bill, and calling on his friend John Charles Herries, McVickar found Joseph Hume "transferred to his Department—He received me with great kindness—& gave me a letter to his successor, urging my wish to pass without search—Fortified by these I went on to the Custom House—Here I found my claims strengthened, by meeting with one of the Chief Officers of my own name—He claimed me as a kindsman—& directed the inferior officer to wave all formality as far as the law wd. justfiy." Nevertheless, McVickar was impressed with "how little the highest influence avails to break these laws" when he "called at Lord Aberdeen's to see his stepson as I had promised." There he learned that his young traveling companion had had the watches Prof Mac had helped him to buy in Switzerland confiscated at the French border, "& that Lord Aberdeen had endeavoured but in vain to save them."

Although most of McVickar's friends were away, he was delighted to hear "Parliament opens on Wednesday & may bring some of them up." At their rooms in Regent Street, Washington Irving and Sir Robert Inglis were among the first callers. "Mrs. Bates soon after came in—& Miss Douglas with her Protegé, one of the House hold of Charles X whom she & her brother brought up from the Isle of Wight—He is a gentlemanly handsome young man & his story quite a romantic one—His Grandfather suffered in the cause of Louis XVI—as both father & son had nearly done in that of Charles.— Conversing relative to some of my late friends in Paris—I find my entertainer Jullien is no other than the celebrated Jullien

—private Secretary of Robespierre—& instigator of half his proscriptions—My friend Bowring who is now in Paris on a Mission to the Radicals—has more reputation I find for talent than honesty." However, McVickar added, "He was regarded as coming out of the Greek loan with clean hands."

John Bowring was at the time associated with Henry Parnell in reporting on French accounts and was soon to serve on a commission with George Villiers (later Lord Clarendon), another member of the Political Economy Club, investigating commercial relations between the two countries. Bowring's history "shows talent," McVickar admitted, noting that "he was educated a wine merchant—at Bordeaux—afterwards on the Rhine & in Russia where amid his commercial labours he made himself master of their language & literature—failed in business—took to writing as his livelihood—was established as Editor of the Westminster—by the wealthy aristocratic Radicals—on a quarrel arising—outgeneralled them, & threw them out instead of they him—& now carries on aided by the ready talent & equally ready funds of Col. Thompson."

Perronet Thompson, who with Sir John Bowring had called on McVickar, was himself "a remarkable man." When he was governor of Sierra Leone he had "headed the expedition against the ********** & was one of the few that escaped the massacre that overwhelmed them—Returning home, he became a most powerful annonymous writer—unknown even to his brother officers—Senior's brother (who was under him) recognized his handwriting on a pamphlet lying on his brother's table & thus the secret was discovered—His father who was an eminent merchant at Hull—& partner of Wilberforce's died a few years ago leaving him £150,000 —wh. he spends in advancing the liberal cause—last year he clothed 150 Spanish Refugees at his own expense & many acts of that kind." Thompson was about to join the Political Economy Club.

On returning through the city, McVickar had again "stopped in at the India House to pay a visit to Mill the Economist, whom I had been disappointed in not meeting at the dinner—Under Dr. Horsefield the Librarian I visited that immense establishment—Dr. H. is an American who went to Batavia 30 years ago—became eminent in the natural history of Java—& is now surrounded with his own labours in the Museum of the India House, of wh. he is Chief Librarian." As for James Mill, who four years ago had brought out a third and revised edition of his *Elements of Political Economy,* he had now risen to the position of examiner of India correspondence. There also was the son, John Stuart Mill, who was assisting his father and seemed rather overawed by his elder's austere character. Nevertheless, McVickar was impressed by the younger Mill, who five years before, at the age of nineteen, had edited Bentham's *Treatise upon Evidence.*

As an economist, McVickar had versed himself thoroughly in the matter of coinage in America, so that after his final business at customs, he took the opportunity of stopping in at the newly constructed mint. He had "dined at Mr. Hume's with Mr. Matheson of the Mint & had promised to visit him in his Palace of gold—The new Mint is a splendid Establishment outside of the Town—Mr. M's name gave me entrance but unfortunately he was out of town—& the Mint not at work from an injury to one of their Steam Engines—I lounged away half an hour however, in one of the offices seeing the bars of gold & silver weighed—& in conversation with one of the officers of the Bank who was then superintending it—Asking about the operation of the Branch Banks of Eng-d, I found not one of them paid their way—that it was a measure of expence but forced upon the Bank—they are at present 14 in number—They issue notes struck for each—wh. are payable in gold either at that particular Branch or in London."

From here McVickar proceeded to the Bank of England "& passed thro' its various offices etc—I do not think them very happily or conveniently disposed—The Rotunda is a fine singular room—From this I passed under the guidance of a very polite & intelligent stranger to the Stock Exchange—Getting thro' the first room without losing my hat I penetrated with him into the Sanctum Sanctorum of Brokers where the Bulls & bears were in full conclave, or rather in sharp fight, for such hasty movements & sharp outcries I never heard or saw among peaceful men—Moments seemed hours to them—& we were nearly overturned a dozen times, by running out & running in with the speed of madmen—to offer, to accept."

After stopping in "at the American Coffeehouse" for refreshment, McVickar went on to look up Jacob Perkins, who had devised a steel check plate for printing bank notes. It had proved so effective in Massachusetts that the state had made it compulsory in 1809. McVickar understood he had gone to London to complete a contract with a bank of England. Finally Prof Mac located the factory and noted that "at Perkins the Machinist I passed an hour —he is perfecting nothing of his great schemes & is not in spirits—he talked of returning next year to America—his steel rollers transferring impressions to new steel plates is now old—but is both engenious & successful—he complains bitterly of the Bank of Eng-d. who employed him in making experiments on wh. he expended £3000. & then neither employed him nor his plates—an ordinary copper plate will give perhaps 2000 good impressions—a steel one 20,000—but on his plan of transfer an indefinite number." McVickar was impressed with the efficiency of the idea and it was with satisfaction he heard ten years later that Perkins' plates were producing the first penny postage stamps. In fact, the British government continued for forty years making its stamps with the Perkins invention.

That afternoon John McVickar and his wife drove "to pay Mrs. Lockhart a short visit—house beautifully situated on the Park—She is surrounded with the likenesses of her Father in every form," he noted and added, "I longed to carry one off." From the London residence of Sir Walter Scott's daughter, the McVickars drove on to dinner with Sir Robert Inglis at Battersea Rise. There they met "the old Countess of Cork paying a visit with Miss Douglas—At dinner there was no company, they being on the wing for Brighton to join Lady Inglis—with young Thornton had much talk of Cambridge—found they had introduced there also University Examination at the end of the second year, this even under the same name as the Oxford one—little go—In his college (Trinity) there was also an annual Exam." Their next appointment was at the Bullers to make final arrangement for Anna McVickar's part as "brides maid at the wedding wh. takes place on Thursday." On reaching Lady Buller's, they found it was "a family party, her son Sir T. Buller, a liberal talented young man, Lord Tenterden Chief Justice of King's Bench etc."

When they had met Miss Douglas earlier they had promised her "to drop in in the course of the Eveng," and so it was about eleven o'clock they arrived at Miss Douglas's rooms. There they were introduced to Thomas Campbell, the poet. Except for *The Pleasure of Hope,* published by Campbell over thirty years ago, McVickar knew nothing to justify his literary reputation, and his activity in urging the foundation of a University of London did not commend him any the more to the professor of Columbia. Nevertheless, Campbell was here the center of attention and "after some pressing," gave them a recitation of part of *Julius Caesar.*

"Campbell is a man of inferior interest to the other great poets we have met," McVickar decided. "He wants their simplicity as well as power. His conversation, in short, is that of an ordinary man."

John McVickar would have been rather bored if there had not been among the guests the old countess of Cork whom he had met at Battersea Rise. She was the Miss Monckton, described in Boswell's life, to whom Johnson applied the phrase of *Pretty fool.* "Pretty she might have been," McVickar observed, "but fool she certainly never was." James Boswell had described her as "the lively Miss Monckton who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at her house," and said that "her vivacity enchanted the sage."

Even in these later years, McVickar's artist friend, Charles Robert Leslie, observed, "Lady Cork is very old, infirm and diminutive . . . her features are delicate and her skin fair and notwithstanding her age she is very animated." "She is, I believe," Prof Mac noted, "the last remenant of the Johnsonian circle, Lord Stowell excepted," and of course Hannah More, whom the McVickars had come to know at Clifton. Miss More had recalled, having gone to see Dr. Samuel Johnson shortly before he died in 1784, writing her sister at the time, "Miss Monckton carried me and we paid him a very long visit."

The next day, having read in the morning paper a report of Lord Stowell's failing health, and finding himself near the latter's residence, McVickar stopped by to pay his respects. "I sat near half an hour with him," Prof Mac said, "for he seemed anxious to detain me. As he told me, he is now eighty five years old."

The same morning he visited for the second time the Royal Asiatic Society, to which he found "Colonel Fitz-Clarence's name was sufficient introduction" because of his activity in promoting Oriental study. Here they asked the professor from New York "to designate four American libraries or institutions to which they would send their proceedings."

There was a certain amount of last-minute shopping the McVickar family enjoyed doing together. At Ridgway's bookstore, the lounging room of the reading members of Parliament, they came across Sir Harry Parnell again, just back from Paris. After some discussion they left him collecting facts and making himself master of the French system of financial accounts which was, he assured McVickar, "infinitely better than the English."

The professor learned that their friend Nassau William Senior had been requested by Lord Melbourne, the future home secretary in the government Lord Grey was to set up within the next three weeks, to inquire into "combinations and strikes" and advise the government. At a farewell dinner the former Oxford professor of political economy gave in McVickar's honor he heard that a royal Commission was reorganizing and re-endowing Oxford University. From now on Oxford was to be emancipated from its medieval statutes, and to operate under new constitutions and legislative powers. Its fellowships were to be thrown open to merit and the old religious test for matriculation and for the B.A. degree was to be abolished. Prof Mac was stimulated by the home circle of the economist, and spoke of coming away from the "little party at Mr. Senior's" feeling that "they certainly understand the rational enjoyment of life better here than with us."

At another time McVickar was returning through Downing Street, where he had been calling on the chancellor of the Exchequer, when, as he related, "I met the Duke of Wellington with his groom behind him, galloping along in rather a hurried style. Turning into Lord ——'s he jumped from his horse, but instead of entering the house, brushed hastily past me as I came up, and opening a small iron gate descended by a back way to another street." The next day McVickar was interested to read in the *Times* an explanation of the incident he had witnessed. On leaving the

House of Lords the prime minister had been hooted and assailed with missiles, and Prof Mac could bear witness that he "was in full retreat when I saw him." Several arrests were made in consequence.

The professor went to the "house" shortly after that and while there received a message that the chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, requested to see him "at the wool sack." He gave McVickar "unlimited orders for any papers or reports he desired" and offered him admission within the bar when William IV opened Parliament. Finally a farewell breakfast was given for John McVickar by his new friends the Villiers, where he had opportunity of saying goodbye to Wilmot Horton, Joseph Hume of the Foreign Office, Senior, and many others, including John Ramsay M'Culloch.

Among these guests of diverging opinions, McVickar found that "all unite in the critical state of England and especially London where they apprehend some sudden outbreak." The *Edinburgh Review* under Napier had fallen very low, he was told. He admired the scholarship of Macvey Napier, however, who was engaged in editing the supplement of the seventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica.* As for the *Quarterly Review,* in the last number the article on *Babbage* was too liberal for the government. When it was shown at the Council to the duke of Wellington the day before publication, he found fault with it and "sent for Croker, who threw the responsibility on Murray." John Murray in turn referred the matter to Prof Mac's friend Lockhart, who refused to alter the article. The lord chancellor had said to McVickar, "These levelers would be for taking the wig off my very head," at which McVickar observed the times seemed such that a man might count himself "well off in losing only his wig." So it was Wellington resigned rather than accept parliamentary reform and Lyndhurst was succeeded by Lord Brougham as chancellor.

On Saturday night, October 30, 1830, when Prof Mac wrote in his diary, "I close this day my account with London," the invitation for the opening of Parliament arrived. "It is a disappointment to give it up," he complained, "but so it must be, and so farewell London, England, Europe; and now homeward."

Many crowded to bid them farewell, and at seven they joined the mail coach of which they had taken the inside. "Rode all night very comfortably," he recorded, "and reached Portsmouth a little after eight."

On Novemebr 8 Prof Mac began the log of his homeward voyage on the good ship *Ontario*. "Two days sail from the channel,—We have changed the scene. I know nothing that makes such a sudden one as that from the world of a great city to the waste of waters; it is like another state of existence."

Their first excitement came one "evening just at dark in the midst of a heavy squal. There was a cry that the elephant," which Prof Mac called "our fellow-passenger, was out of her house. The captain, with great presence of mind ordered the ship before the wind, and the mate with equal courage went up to the huge beast who had wreathed her trunk around the chains, crying Back! back!" As the McVickars stood by in the glimmer of the swaying lanterns, they were finally relieved to see the great hulk of animal ballast "retire quietly to her house."

Between the McVickars and their homeland, however, stretched "a stormy passage of fifty-eight days" fraught with danger and deprivation. During the long, dark, anxious nights Prof Mac would lie awake as the little sailing vessel battled tremendous gales, and he noted, "We were often cheered by the notes of a canary whose cage hung opposite our cabin door. His song was always loudest in the height of the tempest, and to it by way of calming his own fears while "the worst apprehensions were being circulated" [2] in England as to the fate of the *Ontario*, Prof Mac wrote the following lines:

"Teach lovely songster! teach to me
That matin hymn of praise,
Which on the dark and stormy sea
I hear thee nightly raise.

And through the stormy seas of life,
In sorrow's darkest hour
I'll think I hear thy matin song
And feel its gentle power."

PART III

CHAPTER 1

The Trial of Personality

Death and the Distaff . . . Loss and Profit of 1837

THE year of 1830 had been one of triumph and pleasing adventure for John McVickar and his family. But from the moment of their final departure from England the McVickars were beset with a variety of personal misfortunes. The return trip of fifty-eight days (over a month more than the eastbound voyage) was stormy and distressing, and the health of the whole family was affected by it. The *Ontario* finally docked on December 28, 1830. Before the McVickars had fully recovered from their rough passage, they suffered what was to be the first of a series of tragic losses.

On March 9, 1831, Philip Hone noted in his diary, "Died yesterday afternoon, Miss Anna McVickar in the 21st year of her age. This lovely girl was the daughter of Prof McVickar of Columbia College. She returned a short time since with her parents from Europe. Intelligent and amiable, her loss will be severely felt by all who knew her." [1] Among those who recalled her as one "whose spirit God had touched," was Lydia Huntley Sigourney (later to be hailed as the American Hemans), who asked McVickar for the privilege of publishing "a brief memoir of your daughter," inquiring if there were either likeness or miniature of her which Prof Mac would allow an artist to engrave.[2]

To the family's grief over Anna's death anxiety was soon added when Eliza McVickar failed to rally from the shock. It was hoped that she might benefit from a change, and an excursion to the hills of eastern Pennsylvania was planned to follow the Columbia commencement. Even aunt Sally Bard, now seventy-seven, felt compelled to join the expedition for the sake of her niece Eliza, whom she had nursed through every illness since childhood.

John McVickar, restraining his own grief, was the life of the party, suggesting games for passing the time and gaily pretending to be the founder of a mock-heroic society such as Wordsworth and Coleridge had planned for that region. Whether sheltered from a storm under the leaky canvas of the covered wagon or sitting around a camp fire at night in the not too friendly Indian country, everyone joined in the laughter and song until they reached Wilkesbarre. There Eliza McVickar was taken with an attack serious enough to prevent her being moved for another month. Then, with utmost care for the invalid, Prof Mac conducted his family back to "No. 8 Columbia" in good time for the college opening. But Eliza McVickar remained in low spirits.

During this anxious period John McVickar's mother proved his greatest source of comfort. For most of the twenty-one years following the linen merchant's death, his widow Ann Moore McVickar had been a social leader in New York City. Now when her three score years and ten were accomplished she began to settle her affairs. She made over the family shares in the Society Library and in the Tontine Coffee House,[3] also a claim acquired from the Dongan domain for "all ponds, water courses and mines" on Staten Island, and other rights and possessions indicative of the family's association with the development of the urban community. Then on the third of April 1833 Ann McVickar succumbed to "a rapid but not painful attack of the prevailing influenza," leaving the families of her seven surviving children to carry on the ideals she had set.[4] In the following month at the Moore homestead in Newton her sister, Patience Dongan, died.

Close on his mother's death, John McVickar suffered his greatest loss on April 27, 1833. As Philip Hone recorded it that night in his diary: "Died this afternoon at the college, Eliza, wife of Professor McVickar and daughter of the late Dr. Bard. This excellent lady was in the 46th year of her age. Her daughter Anna died about two years ago, since which time Mrs. McVickar has never mixed in society but has been gradually sinking in the grave."[5]

Eliza Bard McVickar was buried near her parents behind the little church they had built at Hyde Park on the Hudson. Prof Mac's word to his bereaved children, three boys and four girls between the ages of six and nineteen, was, "You loved your mother, follow her example. Let religion give strength to your character, consistency to your conduct and cheerfulness to all your future prospects. Let benevolence be in all your plans and energy in all you execute; fear neither difficulties, nor danger, nor self-denial in the path of duty; and without losing sight of providence, keep ever, as your dear mother did, a willing mind and an open hand whenever God places before you the means of doing good." [6]

This noble declaration was to guide the remaining years of John McVickar's own life, yet he confided to Eliza's aunt, Sally Bard, that "home in its dearest sense I have no longer on earth." And in all the thirty-five years that followed he sought companionship through a miniature of his wife. As he expressed it years later, "Her dear likeness has ever been my greatest comfort. I open it on my table; I have her gentle face as my companion whether I write or read." [7]

After Eliza McVickar died, relatives took over the care of the younger children until the beginning of the summer vacation, when the professor started collecting his precious brood. His youngest was stopping with his aunt Augusta and uncle William Jay in Bedford. To six-year-old "Willie" his father wrote, "If there is anyone coming from your Uncle Jay's, you will come with them & ask them to pay for you & I will repay them—if no one is coming ask your Aunt to lend you money, say 12 shillings, & if convenient to let you come by the stage to Sing Sing, as the safest & landing you nearer home."

The anxious father advised William to "take care of your trunk & all your things & my things & be very careful in getting on board & from the steam boat & keep quiet when on board, not going near the machinery. I yesterday saw a poor boy fall in between the dock & boat & nearly drowned. I threw him a rope." [8] The professor sent his eldest son, Samuel Bard, on a "grand tour" following his graduation from Columbia in 1833. After visiting Baltimore, Philadelphia and Wheeling, he had gone to Cincinnati in Ohio, and thought of returning to spend the winter in Europe. "Stay in Ohio," his father advised, "till the first members of congress are coming on, accompany them to Washington where you will receive a package of letters from me introducing you to the leading men, among others Webster, Adams, Calhoun, etc."

From Eliza McVickar's beloved Hyde Park aunt Sally Bard wrote sadly on how much had been altered in recent years. Stopping at the rectory with her grandniece, wife of the Reverend Samuel Roosevelt Johnson, she said she sympathized with the rector's plan to go to Ohio as a missionary. In her diary she noted how she had "passed a day at the Cottage & walked to the old pavillion, a sad memento of the Bards' fallen earthly structure." Aunt Sally had never become reconciled to Dr. Hosack's purchase of the Bard's estate and was almost indignant that now the "grounds were thronged with villagers on foot and in carriages from Poughkeepsie to look at, as they called it—*Hosack's Gardens*." At this time it was reported that "Dr. Hosack squanders many thousands upon his seat at Hyde Park" to the end that he had "barns sufficient stow all the hay of Poughkeepsie and cellars underneath that could hold all the cider of the same." [9]

Because of these changes McVickar decided to establish a new summer home in the Black River country upstate where his brothers and sister had settled down after marrying into the Constable family. His eldest brother James had lost his wife Eweretta Constable some three years earlier, and had married his uncle Nathan's widow, a granddaughter of Peter Goelet. Prof Mac bought his house and called it the White Cottage after their beloved abode near the Hyde Park Church.

* * *

The years that followed the death of his wife found McVickar trying as best he could to provide for the needs of their children. His concern for their material welfare drove him into new activities. Among these was his venture into the land speculations following the development of the western territories. He had inherited considerable property from his father, and in common with other men of substance he joined in the rush to increase his holdings, both in the city of New York and in the west.

The financing of a country which expanded daily was difficult to control. Land speculation in formerly inaccessible areas was further encouraged by new means of transportation. Horse-drawn barges on the Erie Canal and small, long-tillered, center-board packets—of which there were twelve hundred in 1832—sailing up the Hudson to where the river joined the canal, were making New York a market for the newly opened western territories. Added to this, steam propulsion on land such as the Lake Erie and Western Railroad and an extensive system on the newly opened Albany to Schenectady line incorporated to continue to Utica, promised fortunes in real estate.

As a matter of shrewd speculation, in 1835 McVickar started purchasing land on the north side of what had two years before been laid out as Union Square. It was advantageously placed at the junction of the Boston and Bloomingdale Roads and McVickar was interested in developing it after the manner of the open spaces he had admired in Paris. It had been cleared of buildings and graded. Now it was being paved and encircled with an iron railing. In time it was to be lauded as the most beautiful square in New York.

On December 16, 1835, a fire broke out in a dress shop in the lower part of the city and was quickly spread by a high wind through adjacent wooden buildings. A temperature lower than had been experienced for fifty years had coated the wells and cisterns with thick ice and frozen over the rivers. The water congealed in the hose of the volunteer fire companies and the conflagration was prevented from spreading only by blowing up houses with gun powder. As it was, the blaze raged for three days over thirteen acres, destroying almost seven hundred buildings and 20 million dollars' worth of property from Wall and Broad Streets to the East River. As a result, ten thousand people were thrown out of employment.

In spite of these heavy losses, no time was lost in repairing the damage. Easy credit encouraged rebuilding, which in turn stimulated both wholesale and retail trades. So great was the demand for architects in the reconstruction that an American Institute of Architects was now formed, in which John McVickar took a personal interest. The professor also availed himself of the speculative opportunities offered by the building boom and increased his property holdings until he controlled the entire north side of Union Square.

In the years following the fire, the streets of lower Manhattan were rebuilt with modern commercial structures. The first of New York's restaurants to compare with those McVickar had admired in Paris was expanded on a grand scale by Lorenzo Delmonico on Broad Street. The city's water supply was enlarged. The water frontage was filled in to accommodate increased shipping, and on the west bank of the Hudson construction was extended on the Erie Railroad.

Theatrical standards were improved with the appearance of such actresses as Charlotte Cushman and Ellen Tree on the New York stage. Clubs became a vogue. The Bohemians met at Pfaffs and the Arcadians in a costly clubhouse of their own. A Sketch Club had been carrying on the tradition of Cooper's Lunch for some years, and now Philip Hone started a club for entertaining visiting dignitaries with sumptuous dinners at members' houses. The first club in a modern sense, however, the Union Club at Fifth Avenue and 21st Street, was established in 1836. Nevertheless, the Club, which had for the past decade and more included John McVickar's circle of twelve, apparently continued its informal gatherings.

There was great excitement at Columbia over the preparation for a semicentennial celebration. It was the fiftieth anniversary not only of the revival of King's College under its present name, but also of the Constitution of the United States. And for John McVickar as well it marked the turn of his half century. The college buildings were bedecked with flowers and busts and a painting of Professor McVickar in the midst. Contemporary accounts recorded that on April 13, 1837, an imposing procession of officials and visiting dignitaries paraded to St. John's Church on Varick Street to confer fourteen honorary degrees. Among the recipients were such literary lights as Fitz-Green Halleck and William Cullen Bryant. N. P. Willis, who had returned after three years as a foreign correspondent for the *New York Mirror,* described the president's levee in the evening as "one of the most striking fetes New York ever witnessed. The picture galleries and conservatories of half the town were laid under contribution to supply plants."

Within a month of this gay event, the prevailing atmosphere of optimism and prosperity changed suddenly to one of panic. A sharp rise in land value was followed by a financial crisis. In May 1837, the legislature authorized a suspension of specie payment for a year. The business world was paralyzed; bankruptcy and widespread ruin followed, eventually leading to an outbreak of riots.

One of Professor McVickar's Columbia students, George Templeton Strong, noted in his diary on May 3, "near 250 failures thus far," but his own failure the following day to "hand in composition to M'V for which I take it for granted the old —— will hand me over to the Board or to the President at least" caused him more personal anxiety. Six days later the diary noted that "speculation here has been spreading of late like a kind of card house—military out in Park Place and in front of the City Hall—McVickar losing terribly—I saw him this morning coming up from Wall street." [10]

John McVickar lost so heavily that to raise cash for immediate obligations he was forced to sell even the personal treasures with which his home was furnished. Ironically, the seemingly valueless lands which he retained in the west later turned out to have been extremely profitable investments, since they were found to contain oil. Another investment which survived the crash of 1837 remained in the family many years until it was sold at a great price as part of the site on which was constructed the Woolworth skyscraper. But all this was in the future. For the professor there were immediate debts to be paid.

In the end it was not the loss of money which mattered. For in these days of crisis McVickar became convinced that there was something wrong *per se* with the kind of speculation which had brought on the panic. He was overcome with a sense of personal guilt, and until the end of his life looked on this crisis as a moral lesson—a lesson on the vanity of temporal things.

In the difficult months that followed, he was again faced with family tragedies. His son Bard after a short stay in Philadelphia was taken sick and had gone to Turin for his health. However, he failed to improve. As soon as the term was over, McVickar hastened upstate to be with him. In August 1837, Bard died. Aunt Sarah Bard arrived from Hyde Park just too late to see him, and herself died a few days later. She was eighty-two and Samuel Bard McVickar twenty-three. They represented for John McVickar the comfort of the past and the hope of the future.

It was characteristic of the man that while still in Turin endeavoring to comfort his bereaved family, he accepted an invitation from Columbia to address the graduates at the commencement of October 1837. As he climbed the gentle hills of Lewis County or walked along the banks of its swift-running river, he reflected on the events of the past few years.

Within six years he had lost his wife, two children, his mother, and aunt Sally Bard. In the panic of 1837 he had lost not only his investments but many of his most cherished personal possessions. The world in which the study of political economy had once seemed of prime importance had collapsed around him. The triumph of recognition and honor which in 1830 had been such heady wine seemed insignificant in the face of what had followed. Writing his commencement address, he spoke not only to the graduates but to himself.

"Our first views made worldly success dependent upon attainments;" Prof Mac started writing for the Columbia alumni, "experience shows it to be more the result of character, of probity, honor, truth and unblemished morals." He dwelt on the function of education as implanting "self government," and went on to "a yet deeper lesson of life which throws us back on religion and makes us feel the inadequacy of all education that has not laid its foundation there. We began with labouring for the world, never doubting *its* value. What shall we do when our chief treasure has been 'weighed in the balance and found wanting.' "

He questioned "a course of education that leaves the mind unfurnished in this emergency. Are we justified in calling that education a sufficient one; nay, are we justified in calling it education at all if it have fitted the man neither for his hardest trials, nor his highest duties?"

"Now gentlemen," he continued, "if such be our convictions let us act on them and no longer leave our educated sons to grow up rich in science but beggars in this better knowledge. Let us at least lay the foundations of christian truth in their minds by their being well instructed in the evidences of natural and revealed religion." And here he planned to propose a "lectureship devoted specifically to this end."[11]

The address which the *New York American* later quoted at some length and called "one of the happiest efforts of one of our best writers," was delivered by John McVickar on October 4 in the Columbia chapel. Even the critical diary of Templeton Strong observed, "M V's oration was good, decidedly, and in point of delivery exceptional. Its chief aim appeared to be the inculcation of the importance of religion in a collegiate course."[12]

The professor warned that the development of science which placed power in the hands of men without moral control might result in their own destruction. "All truth is one," he pled in vibrant tones as the color mounted in his cheeks, "and come from what source it may, can never be at variance with itself—With our limited powers of vision we see truth but in fragments, and to them give the name of varied sciences; but could we, from some loftier stand, take them all in at one comprehensive glance, we would see them to be but parts of one great science—but radii of one circle of which nature is the circumference and God the centre."[13]

Seven years later, closing his "Account book of fifteen years," John McVickar added a final comment on the events of 1837. Noting his "penitential thoughts" on a "long arrear of worldliness and grasping desire of wealth," he wrote: "All the sorrows of my life from all other causes have not equalled those from this single source, namely, the speculative purchases into which I was led by persuasion, or perhaps self-prompted, in the years 1835, 1836, and 1837; as I verily believe they have brought upon me deeper guilt than any or all other temptations united."

As for the future, he thanked God that he had "survived the shock, the trial and the disgrace, and that a remnant of days is yet spared me, with an humbler mind and higher hopes, and that God has at length called me to a spiritual charge wherein I may show the sincerity of my faith and repentance."[14]

CHAPTER 2

Rival Cities

Philadelphian Personalities . . .
Boston Brahmans and the Mills of Lowell

THREE years before the death of his son Samuel Bard, John McVickar had decided to spend a vacation with him introducing him to old friends in Philadelphia, where Bard was then living. Apart from his old friends, the professor soon made new ones. As on his trip abroad, his many interests opened doors wherever he went.

Late in December 1834 the professor arrived in Philadelphia. After breakfast he set off with his son "through the snow to call, by appointment, upon Mr. Vaughan, an old bachelor of three score years and ten." McVickar appreciated the important part John Vaughan's brother Benjamin had played in the peace negotiations between Great Britain and the former colonies in 1782. Six years later this political economist emigrated from England to America and his letters had been sent from Maine to his brother John in Philadelphia. There they were read before the Philosophical Society. Their brother William Vaughan, who remained in England, had, thanks to David Hosack's introduction, shown McVickar certain courtesies during his visit to London.

John Vaughan was himself vice-consul for Sweden, Norway, and Brazil, and as secretary of the Literary and Philosophical Society had his chambers in their building. There McVickar "found him with a book in his hands in which he was ruling a line for me to write my name as a visitor to the institution." After begging him "to rub it out as I always wrote crooked with such aids," John McVickar scored his name just under that of Harriet Martineau.

The year after McVickar's visit to England, Miss Martineau had attracted public attention by starting a series of tales she called *Illustrations of Political Economy*. McVickar had heard of her through Malthus as a clever but unhappy woman who professed to have no sense of smell or taste. She had now come to America with an introduction to the professor of political economy at Columbia, and her name on the register, McVickar observed, "reminded me of her letter, so off we set to call upon her."

He was directed to Miss Martineau at "the residence of Mr. Furness," pastor of a church founded by Dr. Joseph Priestly in 1796. John McVickar knew the Unitarian William Henry Furness as a pioneer in the study of Jesus as a purely historic figure. Recently the pastor had drawn much public attention by his activity in support of the antislavery movement. His Abolitionist party, which was small and unpopular at the time, enlisted Harriet Martineau as an aggressive supporter.

McVickar was agreeably impressed by the thirty-two-year-old author, her appearance and manner, noting "her pleasing countenance, fine eye and sweet voice." He was prepared to discuss what she had written on the Poor Law and her current publication, *Illustrations of Taxation*. He encouraged her to speak of men into whose literary circle in London she had been admitted during the past three years. Henry Hallam, the philosophical historian, had sponsored her as he had other aspiring writers, and she reported that he was planning a continuation of his *Constitutional History* of which McVickar disapproved because of its apparent political bias. She mentioned, too, that the *Remains* of his son, Arthur Henry Hallam, were about to be issued.

Of young Hallam's college mates who had formed the Apostles Club at Cambridge, Miss Martineau could only say that neither Monkton Milnes nor Tennyson had produced anything since their friend's death. She spoke of another literary associate, Edward Bulwer, whose current novel, *The Last Days of Pompeii,* was making a stir on both sides of the Atlantic. Sydney Smith, the originator of the *Edinburgh Review,* had left the cathedral at Bristol (where he had been prebend when McVickar visited that city) and according to Miss Martineau had for the past two or three years been residing in London as canon of St. Paul's. Henry

Milman, whom McVickar had met as professor of poetry at Oxford, was also going to London to be rector of St. Margaret's Westminster, but neither had published any new literary works.

Harriet Martineau had for years been afflicted with deafness, so that necessarily the conversation was carried on with the aid of an ear trumpet, and McVickar admitted, "At first it was rather awkward to look in her face and speak in the trumpet, and sometimes I reversed the order and spoke to her face and looked in the trumpet. But practice makes perfect, especially the willing scholar, so an hour made me quite an adept—." In the end John McVickar decided, "Like all her country, she disdains to inquire; she means well, however, and I gave her a little of that commodity I so often deal in,—plain advice,—the result's she is to report at the college next summer." [1]

On their way to call on Miss Martineau, Bard and his father had "stopped to see West's great picture." Benjamin West, who had found a patron in his early American days in Dr. John Bard, had befriended his son Sam Bard when he was a medical student in London. John McVickar, from the time of his sojourn in England with his father, recalled West, then sixty-seven, at the height of his profession, and had long admired his courage in abandoning the traditional Greek and Roman and introducing modern costume into his historical painting. West's outstanding work in America was the vast canvas he had painted for Philadelphia.

As professor McVickar and his son Bard stood before the painting, he recalled other examples of West's work in London and felt this was unquestionably his best, "but still, in my opinion," he advised his son, "a moderate production. Compared with the pictures of the old masters it is tame and cold both to the eye and mind. It wants power in the conception, skill in grouping, spirit in the expression, and brilliancy in coloring; it is like a painstaking poet alongside of Shakespear." However, he later recalled, "I take credit for saving this from destruction, for from a broken window, the snow was driving upon it in a way that would soon have given it at least one of the merits of the old pictures."

They dined at the United States Hotel where the professor was staying in Philadelphia, and spent the afternoon at the Athenaeum.

This McVickar declared was "worth a hundred of ours because people are in earnest, in the support of it."

The day was not over for the professor and his son, for McVickar's journal recorded that at seven they "dressed for the ball, with two engagements between. The first was the Philosophic Society where we met some old and made some new friends." Among the "bores" McVickar fell upon there, he noted an English doctor who "cures all with the stomach-pump, the theory of which he plied with such success upon me that it came near producing the natural effect, but I fortunately escaped in time."

The second visit before the ball was "to the levee of a great Quaker nabob, Mr. Dunn, who opened his *salon* and library to company every Friday. We adjourned to it in force," McVickar noted "Robert Walsh, Colonel Drayton, Dr. Julius and myself." Nathan Dunn's Chinese collection was much talked of. There in Spruce Street John McVickar found among others Nicholas Biddle, still a director of the Bank of the United States, whose national charter seemed about to terminate. He spoke of Biddle as "the head of 'the monster,' who taking me aside, not as you might suppose for the purpose of devouring me, established me in a snug corner where we had a long talk." Biddle, he found, was resolved to carry on his institution—if necessary, as the Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania.

It made Prof Mac happy to report of his son Bard, "Well in health and well in spirits. I put him on his mettle. To the ladies I introduce him as a young beau, to the politicians as a young diplomat, to Mr. Biddle as a young banker and to jurists as a young lawyer."

"Your fears, I know, are more awake for me than for him," Prof Mac wrote aunt Sally Bard at Columbia, "and though I do confess myself a little younger in some points, yet still, for good, I trust I shall never be old.

Since life is thought, then think I will
That youth and I are housemates still."

And he concluded, "A happy Christmas again to you and all my dear children." [2]

His last hospitable invitation came from the editor of the *American Quarterly Review* (whom Poe described as "one of the finest writers, one of the most accomplished scholars, and, when not in too great a hurry, one of the most accurate thinkers in the country").[3] Robert Walsh suggested that "as the heavens have proved so adverse, you may be still in our city. If so, you must come to us this evening, along with your son. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good." [4] But John McVickar's visit to the city of brotherly love came to an end with the close of the Christmas vacation.

Professor McVickar returned to his duties in New York with new vigor, and when the time came for the summer vacation, he took his family upstate to their "White Cottage" near the Black River. There he made a point of being "up early to make use of the daylight for reading," then "out of my room about seven o'clock, prayers and breakfast by eight, housekeeping and music for the girls till about ten." The schedule was interrupted once by "Swiss bows and arrows which have just arrived" (from his friends in Geneva) and provided "a strong temptation to pass half an hour in archery, but," he recorded, "down to reading we get at last, while some draw and others work." Following a two-thirty dinner there was "music, reading and the hay field," and after tea they adjourned to the north parlor, "where is our sofa and piano." [5]

Because the Philadelphia climate was taxing Bard McVickar's health, it was thought wise to have him spend the winter with the Constable relatives in the dry air of the Black River country. So it was that after the 1835 commencement the professor went to bring his ailing son back. From Philadelphia McVickar wrote on October 28 of having paid his respects to his eighty-seven-year-old friend, Bishop White.

William White had been George Washington's pastor in Philadelphia, and McVickar asked the bishop "as to General Washington's religious character," but gathered "there was little to tell beyond respect and decorum. He never was a communicant, though his wife was." Prof Mac "called on the Bishop before church, time enough to walk with the younger ladies." Bishop White, having gone before by coach, preached "a sound, excellent sermon," but McVickar added, "I think in all probability it is his last." The professor was touched by William White's "patriarchial figure and silver hair and benevolent, tranquil features, more especially as he kneeled at the altar or sat down in his crimson, mitred chair." [6]

By November Bard McVickar was settled in the White Cottage at Constableville, from whence he wrote that they "had snow here & everything looks like winter. The calves are shut up in the barnyards & the cows in their stalls and are fed with hay every day but give very little milk." [7] As Christmas approached, he admitted thinking more frequently of home, but there were many relatives of his uncles' and aunts' families to dispel any loneliness. "The thermometer," he observed, "this morning at 9 stood at 26 below 0. My thick riding coat, a pair of socks over my boots, my comfortable round my neck, the ears of my cap pulled down, I am well equipped to face a snowdrift." In short, Bard related, "we have been completely frozen up by this very cold weather, which surpasses everything remembered." [8]

The winter at Constableville had proved so beneficial to Bard McVickar that when spring vacation time came it was possible for him to journey west with his brother Henry prospecting for land. Traveling on horse back twenty miles a day over the same route Bard had taken before, they reached Cincinnati where the brothers parted, since Henry had to return to Columbia for the completion of his last college year. For the next year's expedition, John McVickar hoped to accompany his sons abroad, with the possibility of himself going to Palestine. But these plans came to nothing and by 1837 his two visits with Bard in Philadelphia had become poignant memories of a companionship now ended in the boy's death.

* * *

In the spring of 1836 McVickar was prompted for several reasons to take a trip to Boston. He was interested in the increasing number of young writers who were making that city a center of American letters. Also the helpful contact between Harvard and Columbia Colleges—established for the most part by the professor and his Cambridge friends—had so far been almost entirely confined to correspondence. Then there was a matter of persuading the rector of Trinity Church, Boston, to return to New York. But his immediate concern was the possible sale of a bust of Benjamin Franklin.

On March 22, 1836, McVickar wrote Thomas Wren Ward, treasurer of the Boston Athenaeum, "In reference to the subject of Houdon's bust of Franklin I have communicated with Mr. Cruger—His price is $1000.—The bust was executed in Paris for Franklin's friend, Mr. Dupont de Nemours—by his son it was transferred to its present owner—Mr. Cruger." [9]

DuPont de Nemours, the French economist and founder of the school of "Physiocrats," had been appointed to a commission regarding the recognition of the independence of the United States, and at that time had persuaded Houdon to execute the bust. It was completed just before Houdon left for America in 1784 to do a likeness of Washington. Fifteen years later Pierre Samuel DuPont de Nemours himself emigrated to America, presumably bringing with him the bust which was subsequently "transferred to Mr. Cruger." In 1802 William Bard married the heiress Catherine Cruger, whose son, John Bard, many years later presented the Franklin bust to the Metropolitan Museum. In the present transaction John McVickar was representing the family.

This and other matters led to his undertaking an excursion to Boston in the spring vacation accompanied by his daughter, Frances Pendleton McVickar, now in her seventeenth year. The steamboat which carried them up Long Island Sound McVickar described as "a splendid one,—the afternoon delightful, Frances in good humor, I not in bad, and so we got on pretty well." When he had spoken of this trip at the Club and the expectation of seeing their fellow member, Mayhew Wainwright, who was still rector of Trinity Church, Boston, Jonathan Goodhue told McVickar "of a Mr. Jackson of Lowell on board" whom he would find intelligent, describing him as "a gentleman with green spectacles."

Once on board the steamer, John McVickar and his daughter "speculated for him among our fellow-passengers. There were two competitors for the description," he wrote, "each near to it. One bandy-legged, long-bodied man whose fingers came within twelve inches of the deck, with white spectacles and large, green blinders, like a horse that is apt to be frightened; the other gaunt and tall with glasses, however blue rather than green. What between their physiognomies and their dubious claims," McVickar decided at first not to "trouble them with a new acquaintance."

The passenger with the blue glasses soon made himself known as the Patrick Tracy Jackson who was chiefly responsible for the mills which had manufactured the first cotton cloth in America as early as 1823. On further conversation, McVickar found that his companion's colored spectacles concealed a pair of blue eyes so cheerful and sympathetic that when Jackson suggested a visit to his factory on the Merrimac River, McVickar was inclined to accept. Jackson's original mill had been on the Charles River near Waltham, where his brother-in-law, Francis Cabot Lowell, had designed the machinery when cotton imports were cut off by the war of 1812. Shortly after his brother-in-law's death Jackson had removed the expanding factory to its present location and called the new community Lowell. This brought out a further connection with their companion for the two McVickars, since Francis Cabot Lowell was the father of their friend, John.

There was a sympathy between the McVickars and John Lowell because in the year Anna McVickar had died, Lowell had lost his two daughters, the only children of a mother who had died the year before. It led John Lowell to a touching interest in the professor's daughter Mary, to whom he sent from Paris in 1833 a French annual, *La vie litteraire de Mme Festu,* embellished with English engravings. "I send it in place of another book concerning which I had some conversation with Miss McVickar," he wrote, "as a slight token of my recollection & esteem." John McVickar had commended Lowell to friends in England and on the continent. In return Lowell kept the professor informed as to the state of affairs abroad. Of France he wrote, "It is still somewhat uncertain whether the present government will be able to maintain itself definitely. It is hoped that it may, for the French have already perhaps a little more liberty than they know how to bear & its amount will probably be gradually increased without the intervention of a revolution." Lowell concluded this letter by saying that he had sent McVickar's "pamphlet to the Dutchess of Broglie and she had expressed a good deal of interest." Later McVickar learned of John Lowell's death in 1836 while traveling in India. His will provided a sum of $250,000 for the establishment of what came to be known as the Lowell Institute.

Conversation with their new acquaintance, Mr. Jackson, passed the time pleasantly for John and Frances McVickar. And further diversion was afforded by another fellow passenger, as the professor later reported. "On going to pay our passage," he said, "I found the captain's window barred by a new obstacle. An old woman in paying her fare, whether from hardness of hearing or anxiety to see that her change was right, had climbed up, forced head and shoulders through, and when I reached it, hung about fairly balanced, half in and half out, while the impatient crowd around waiting for their turn were about in an equal balance which way they should help her." [10]

Once in Boston, McVickar and Frances went to the Tremont House, and there the next morning Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright and his daughter called on them. As McVickar described it, "we had plenty of talk while a nice breakfast was making ready, which (I would add for the reputation of our health) we greatly enjoyed." [11]

It seemed the professor's undergraduate critic, Templeton Strong, had also gone to Massachusetts for the spring vacation, and on May 7 he noted while "walking up Tremont St., Boston—just as we got opposite to the Tremont House, whom should I see sailing along just as usual, with his daughter on his arm, but—McVickar himself! There was no mistaking him—and he has gone to Boston *for his health* forsooth. He looks as well as ever, but did not see me." [12]

After contacting Mr. Ward about the Houdon bust, John McVickar's next care was to pay his respects to the Websters who had entertained him so hospitably in Washington. He was not concerned with the party politics of Daniel Webster, but in Webster's conflict with Andrew Jackson over banking he had taken an active interest. Certainly McVickar felt Jackson's "specie circular" was going to add to present difficulties. Now with Jackson's going out of the White House, however, there was a strong feeling among the Whigs in Massachusetts that Webster might be elected president. McVickar found the senator out of town and Mrs. Webster engaged to "set off for New York" an hour after their call. For this she expressed "much regret on Frances' account." [13]

Webster had been retained as counsel for the firm of Baring Brothers, of which Thomas Wren Ward had long been the resident American agent. It had been through McVickar's friend in London, Joshua Bates, that Ward had first secured this appointment, and Ward, now treasurer of Harvard College, made a point of extending to the visiting professor such courtesies as he might desire. One of McVickar's chief interests on any of his jaunts was to investigate new industrial developments. Therefore it was with pleasure he learned that his "kind friend, Mr. Ward, had last night planned Lowell for us today; so at eleven he called in his carriage with his daughter," Prof Mac noted, "for us and Mr. Stevens who with his two boys made up the party."

Colonel John Stevens, now in his eighty-seventh year, and his two sons, Robert Livingston and Edwin Augustus, were the outstanding pioneers in railroad construction in America. To the old colonel went the credit for having put the first steam engine on wheels and for perfecting the first underwater propellor. His sons had for some years been operating the Camden and Amboy Railroad in New Jersey, Edwin (who later established the Stevens Institute of Technology at Hoboken) as treasurer-manager, and Robert as president. The latter and John McVickar were the same age and had gone to Europe in the same year. It was on the voyage over in 1830 that Robert Stevens designed the "T" rail with the broad base and brought back with him the famous "John Bull" locomotive made under his specifications at Stephenson's foundry in England. Since that time he had introduced the use of wooden ties and "hook-headed" spikes for his rails, as well as other improvements.

Because of this, the Stevenses were particularly interested in the doubletrack roadbed which had been laid for the steam railroad now operating between the cotton mill at Lowell and the port of Boston. This had been constructed because an increase in the manufacture of cotton cloth had rendered the old turnpike and canal inadequate. So it was, McVickar recorded, their congenial party "joined the cars at the bridge, set off like the wind and uncommoded by noise, dust or ill-humor, and having got but half through a good long, cheerful argument upon which we had entered, we found ourselves twenty-five miles from Boston in the midst of this little 'Manchester' of six years growth." The center of modern American industrialism had ten years before been incorporated as a town with a population of two thousand and had now just been chartered as a city with a population of eighteen thousand.

"Though composed entirely of factories and the dwellings of the operatives, I beg you not to think of it," McVickar wrote, "either dirty or disagreeable. I assure you it is neither; but neat, clean and airy." This was before the importation of Irish and French-Canadian workers so that the mill hands, except for English dyers and calico printers, were New England women. When McVickar and the party arrived in Lowell, "the young girls were just marshaling back to the mills in troops and bands, looking cheerful and healthy." This and the plans their host had for extending his tracks north to Exeter to form a Boston and Maine railroad were of great interest both to the Stevenses and the professor.

"So after a nice little dinner," he went on to relate, "we resumed our seats at three o'clock in our flying vehicle, and a few minutes after four were again at home, thus having in less than five hours travelled over fifty miles, visited as many manufacturing rooms, eaten a quiet, comfortable dinner, and had two hours of unrestrained, hearty talk, and all without fatigue. So much for the march of improvement!"

McVickar may have had in mind the improvement since 1830 when at the invitation of the directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company he had gone with Philip Hone to Maryland to see the commencement of their great work. As Hone described it, "the morning being fine—the wind being strong from the northwest, we were conveyed with great rapidity a short distance in a car propelled by sails, a very pleasant mode of travelling."

On their return to Boston, "after escorting Frances to Mrs.

Wainwright's where was a little party of young folks," McVickar found that among his engagements he was "to sit an hour with Mr. Bowditch." The astronomer-mathematician Nathaniel Bowditch, whose *New American Practical Navigator* had long been a standard work, had made what McVickar felt was an excellent translation of Laplace's *Mecanique celeste.* He was now sixty-three years old and McVickar observed, "with Mr. Bowditch I was delighted." As a young man John McVickar had come to know Dr. Samuel Bard's friend and colleague, Benjamin Rush, the patriot-physician of Philadelphia. He said his host reminded him "strongly of Dr. Rush in look and manner; cheerful, intelligent and warm hearted, I could hardly break away, and have promised to call again."

His next engagement was for "an hour or two more with one of their scientific clubs." Here he found himself surrounded by the older intellectuals of Boston. The professor recorded nothing of interest at this gathering but he recalled that John Quincy Adams, so often a guest of McVickar's Club in New York, had a boyhood recollection of the Wednesday Evening Club meeting in Boston in 1777. "The club they call the *Old Club,*" and, Prof Mac observed humorously, "it is one of the applications of the epithet with which I will not quarrel." [14]

In Cambridge there were other friends to be seen, such as Jared Sparks (some years later to become president of Harvard College). At the time he had almost finished his monumental work taken from the original manuscripts of George Washington and had already started writing *The Works of Benjamin Franklin.* John McVickar had not seen Sparks since the recent death of his wife, Frances Anne, daughter of William Allen, who had taught one of the Sunday School classes in McVickar's church at Hyde Park. When Sparks married Frances Allen in 1832 they had gone to live in the historic Craigie House in Cambridge. There he had for some years been accepted as a leading social and literary figure in the group which included Prescott, Ticknor, the Everetts, and the Eliots.

It was through his friendship with such men as Sparks and Edward Everett that McVickar was able to keep in touch with the literary prospects of New England, especially of Harvard College, where James Russell Lowell was an undergraduate at the time. He learned that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had returned in the spring from Germany, where he had been preparing himself for the professorship of modern languages and belles lettres at Harvard. He was then twenty-eight, a jaunty figure, immaculately clad. His recent book of European sketches written in the style of Washington Irving recalled McVickar's own experiences abroad.

There was what the professor counted a weak attempt to adapt the romantic method of Walter Scott to the American scene just published by an antislavery member of the state legislature named John Greenleaf Whittier. Whittier was to turn up in New York during the course of the next summer but it was the mid-fifties before he came to be thought of as a poet ranking with Longfellow and Bryant. And even if the Columbia professor of belles lettres had known that Nathaniel Hawthorne, as editor of the *American Magazine for Useful and Entertaining Knowledge,* was collecting his early literary attempts under the title of *Twice Told Tales,* it would have stirred him as little as it did its few readers on its publication the following year. What he did regret was having to leave without hearing one of Ralph Waldo Emerson's lectures at the Masonic Temple in Boston. The essayist-philosopher, sixteen years younger than John McVickar, had visited Coleridge and Wordsworth some time after the professor's return from England and this gave them friends in common. McVickar could only regret Emerson's antagonistic stand on the sacramental nature of the Holy Communion, but he felt his current volume, called *Nature,* showed literary merit.

Returning to New York, John McVickar ran across a former Harvard librarian, Joseph Green Cogswell, whom he had known in connection with George Bancroft's educational experiment in Northampton, Massachusetts. The Round Hill School had been discontinued and Cogswell was now tutoring in New York, where McVickar found him a congenial spirit in their common interest in libraries. John Jacob Astor, whose fur-trading exploits had finally been recorded by Washington Irving under the title of *Astoria,* engaged Cogswell's talent in a project of collecting books for a proposed library. There seemed a dearth of literary activity, however, except that Fenimore Cooper was continuing his retrospective writing with a volume he called *Sketches in Switzerland* and with a promise of more volumes on *Gleanings in Europe* to follow.

To the Club in New York McVickar brought a full report of the industrial development in New England and in turn heard of Peter Cooper's new rolling mill. He told the members of having persuaded Wainwright to return to their midst as assistant-rector of Trinity Church in New York. McVickar had also hoped to include Nicholas Biddle among their distinguished visitors, but although the banker had written expressing "very great pleasure to spend any evening with you," he explained that he was in New York "entirely on business." Therefore he had to "decline making any engagements. But I will certainly call," he added, "before I leave town." [15] Nevertheless, the subject of the expiring charter of the National Bank which he headed was brought up for discussion at the Club by the former secretary of the United States Treasury.

John McVickar always managed to benefit by his jaunts abroad. He was selective in the things he inspected and in the persons with whom he conversed, always with the thought of bringing back topics for consideration by the Club, or of accumulating information which would add to the interest of his college lectures. A keen conversationalist, the professor was skillful in drawing out whomever he met and learned a great deal by questioning men of all classes and professions about their specialties. He appreciated the potential in young men, not only youths whose careers were being shaped in his Columbia classrooms but scholars such as Francis Lieber whom he had heard well spoken of in Boston as the editor of the *Encyclopedia Americana*. Lieber, now teaching political science in South Carolina, engaged McVickar's attention as a possible successor to his own chair of political economy at Columbia.

CHAPTER 3

Anglo-American Literati and International Copyright

The Literary Scene . . . International Copyright and Charles Dickens . . . McVickar's Preface to Coleridge . . . Neighbor to Washington Irving

JOHN MCVICKAR's interest in literature was more than academic. He himself enjoyed a considerable reputation as a writer, and at a time when New York could boast such authors as Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Melville, and Willis, and poets such as Halleck, Bryant, Poe, and eventually Walt Whitman, McVickar was recognized as a dean of letters. His powerful Saxon style of writing, particularly as exemplified in his eulogy of Sir Walter Scott, his preface to a work of Coleridge and his two volumes of Bishop Hobart's biography, had been achieved by careful discipline and diligent exercise and was admired not only in America but also in England.

In November 1832, the news of Sir Walter Scott's death reached New York, and Washington Irving and seventy other citizens called a public meeting to consider means of uniting with the committee in Scotland in a tribute to the "Great Minstrel of the North." It was decided to ask John McVickar to "undertake this grateful and interesting duty." [1]

"Prof McV. delivered the eulogium on Walter Scott this evening," Philip Hone recorded on December 6, "at Clinton Hall—prevented from attending—There is purity and refinement in Dr. MV's style of writing and an unaffectedness of manner admirably adapted for his subject on the present occasion. But it will be printed, when I shall enjoy the pleasure of reading it with no risk of disappointment." However, it was only after McVickar had submitted the manuscript of his tribute to Sir Walter's son-in-law, Lockhart, that he acceded to the demand for its publication, for he had never considered it in good taste to make public his visit to Abbotsford.[2]

Mindful of Scott's observation to him that "a common language should make a common copyright," McVickar concluded his eulogium with a plea that as a monument to Scott America should join in creating an international copyright. This evoked so much interest that "it was brought before Congress." At the same time the British consul at Boston, George Manners, himself an author and editor of the *Satirist,* corresponded with Judge Story, then serving as Harvard's first law professor, and with others on this first serious effort to effect a copyright agreement between the United States and Great Britain.[3] McVickar continued his efforts by writing articles on the subject for various publications.

From England in the course of the next few months the professor heard his eulogy of Scott referred to by Sir Robert Inglis as a "just and eloquent tribute." Inglis wrote of how Sir Thomas Acland had read parts of it with great effect at a meeting held at the Mansion House in London to promote a subscription for the purpose of securing Abbotsford to Scott's family.[4] The response in America to the publication of McVickar's forty-two-page treatise on Scott was summed up by Susan Anne Livingston Sedgwick the author of sentimentally didactic stories for children and young people. From Stockbridge, where she and her distinguished husband Theodore Sedgwick made their home, she wrote McVickar, "If to few in our country has been afforded the great privilege of seeing and personally knowing Sir Walter Scott, we must at least rejoice that such a distinction has been awarded to one so capable as the writer, of appreciating justly his character and genius and of transmitting his impressions to others." [5] While from Scotland Anne Grant of Laggan wrote, "Your eulogium of our illustrious friend gave much pleasure, not to say pride, to many of his admirers. It is to be printed at the end of the edition of the works now publishing."

In her letter Mrs. Grant told McVickar of the recent death of James Ballantyne, Scott's printer and confidential friend. He had told her that Scott's sense of the ludicrous was such that in writing he was at times "obliged to lay down his pen and indulge in a hearty laugh." She also spoke of the effect Scot had "on Byron in all his splendid wretchedness." Lord Byron used to say, Anne Grant recalled, "a few more like Walter Scott would have reconciled him to his fellowmen." [6]

Through correspondence with friends in England and Scotland and the reports of returning Americans and visiting Englishmen, the members of the Club were able to keep up with literary developments across the Atlantic, and to join in the animated debates on changing literary attitudes and fashions. McVickar noted with interest that his friend John Gibson Lockhart, still editor of the *Quarterly Review,* had come out with a violent attack on Tennyson's recently published poems, including *The Lady of Shalott* and *The Miller's Daughter.* While Lockhart deplored Tennyson's break with the traditional school, McVickar thought that the recent poems by the twenty-four-year-old poet showed superior craftsmanship to Tennyson's first volume published three years earlier. Tennyson was already at work on *In Memoriam,* his poignant tribute to Arthur Henry Hallam, with whom he had been touring the Continent just prior to the latter's death. But this was not to be published until 1850.

Finally in November 1833 James Fenimore Cooper returned to New York and was naturally invited to the Club, which included so many of his friends. In the course of conversation, it occurred to McVickar that their friend Cooper had sensed that the day of romantic tales such as he was famed for had closed with the death of Walter Scott, whose collected edition of *Waverley Novels* was now completed. Certainly the romantic poets McVickar had known in England were dying out, and their place was being taken by such social thinkers and historians as Thomas Babington Macaulay, now thirty-three years old, to whom McVickar's friend, Lord Lyndhurst, had given a commissionership of bankruptcy. Macaulay had delivered his maiden speech in Parliament while McVickar was in England and had subsequently aided in the passage of the Reform Bill. Nor was the literary promise which the professor had seen in his *Essay on Milton* in 1825 dampened by Macaulay's increased political activity. He continued to contribute important articles, many of them historical and biographical essays, to the *Edinburgh Review*.

McVickar's dream of making New York a literary center such as Edinburgh and London seemed far away. He was disappointed that Fenimore Cooper made so short a stay in the city after his return from Europe. Cooper soon retired to Cooperstown where he became a vestryman of Christ Church and served on the committee which cleared and fenced the churchyard. There followed his farewell *Letter to his Countrymen,* in which he declared that "the American who wishes to illustrate the peculiar principles of his own country by the agency of polite literature, will find his constituency too much under the influence of foreign theories to receive him with favor. It is under this conviction that I lay aside the pen."

Fenimore Cooper relented, however, and appeared in print again in 1835 to relate under the title of *The Monikins* what he had learned in Europe. Washington Irving, on the other hand, after an extended trip west of the Mississippi had turned to the popular theme of the conquest of the West with a book he called *A Tour on the Prairies.* John Jacob Astor had installed him in his house at Hell Gate where his brother Pierre Irving was employed in "slaving at documents," and where the author began to work on a history of Astor's fur trading. McVickar was not among the literati who accepted Astor's dinner invitations, and he agreed with those who considered the coterie at "Astoria" not so much the cultural center it affected to be but merely a "literary clerkship."

John McVickar continued to write articles reflecting the variety of his interests. Many of these he published anonymously in different magazines. The editor of *Knickerbocker,* acknowledging "the pleasure I have taken in the perusal of many papers from your pen," asked the professor for an occasional article upon any subject of general interest.[7] Such papers as the *Churchman* and the *New York Review* seldom appeared without at least one article from him. The *American Quarterly* asked for an article on the United States Bank and many other publications solicited his well-written contributions.

Aside from the serious periodicals featuring articles by renowned scholars and writers, the daily press, under the influence of William Cullen Bryant, owner-editor of the *New York Evening Post,* also began to aspire to higher literary standards. But at the same time, another kind of journalism began to grow up. The new idea of a penny paper took the public fancy. A young medical student had persuaded Horace Greeley and Francis Story to set up a press to carry through this project. Their *Morning Post,* appearing on New Year's Day in 1833, was abandoned in less than three weeks, but before the year was out the *Sun* established a penny daily with a large circulation, and the *Transcript* soon followed its lead.

In the years ahead McVickar was to see almost a hundred papers, periodical and daily, founded and suspended. Many of these were fly-by-nights, composed, printed, and distributed by some young or irresponsible hand but read and talked of by many to whom the printed word assumed the guise of authority. John McVickar respected the press as a means of freedom of expression but he protested against its growing abuse. In a certain case of obvious coercion by the press, McVickar referred to it as "that nameless, headless, irresponsible tribunal which in the present day under the name of *Public Opinion* threatens to swallow up or break down all that the wisdom of our forefathers has contrived in the constitution of either church or state as checks against its vagrant, unauthorized influence. Now Sir," he told the editor of a current periodical which had offended, "this is tyranny." [8]

* * *

As a result of McVickar's contribution to the Walter Scott memorial, English authors looked to him as a champion of international copyright. It was one of the chief concerns of Monkton Milnes, who was now entering Parliament; and in America a committee had been formed, largely through George Palmer Putnam, at the time employed by a New York publishing house, to promote the same idea. On behalf of international copyright and other causes, McVickar continued writing numerous unsigned articles for such magazines as the *New York Review,* and he published a number of practical pamphlets.

In March 1837, at the City Hotel, a dinner was given Daniel Webster, who arrived in New York hailed as the "defender of the Constitution." There were present two hundred and seventy-seven members and guests of the association of Booksellers. "This was the greatest dinner I was ever at," Philip Hone declared, and noted among the eminent literary and scientific men honored on this occasion, "President Duer, Professor McVickar of Columbia College, Chancellor Kent, Mr. Gallatin, Washington Irving, Bryant, Inman, Halleck etc." [9]

The following year there came to John McVickar from England a request from Thomas Arnold, who during the past decade had developed Rugby into an outstanding school. McVickar had followed his career with interest not only because of Arnold's study of the social welfare and moral improvement of the masses, but also because he had contributed materially to the cause of elementary education.

Arnold's letter was accompanied by an introduction from Harriet Martineau, who felt McVickar would "not grudge a little exertion," as she put it, "in a cause in which we English writers owe you much already."

She informed McVickar that Dr. Arnold was "about to publish a work of great importance, on which he has spent the labour of many years. It is of great consequence that it should be well issued in the United States—unaltered, handsome in appearance, with the name of a respectable publisher on the title-page & under arrangements which shall yield as much profit as shall be obtainable for the author." Miss Martineau then asked McVickar to "have the goodness to take charge of the sheets & either to negotiate or to appoint some gentleman in whom you have confidence to negotiate with a publisher on Dr. Arnold's behalf?"

Harriet Martineau had herself just written *Retrospect of Western Travel* and was publishing *The Martyr Age of the United*

States in the *Westminster Review.* Thus she had a personal interest in the Anglo-American copyright agreement. She told McVickar that she had "not surrendered the hope that Congress may give us the protection of American law before the session closes. Our parliament," she explained, "is going to pass a Bill containing a clause expressly protective of foreign copyright. We shall have the satisfaction of having done our duty by foreign authors; & I doubt not your honest & friendly exertions will soon obtain justice for us." And she added, "I heartily wish it may be in time for Dr. Arnold's book. If not, I know you will favour him with your best advice & assistance." [10]

"The work to which she alludes," Dr. Arnold explained to McVickar, "is a History of Rome; the first volume of which, including the first three centuries & a half, down to the Gaulish Invasion, is now in the Press. I am working steadily at the second volume, but my occupations here as Master of a large public school, do not allow me to make very rapid progress."

Thomas Arnold did not propose to trouble Professor McVickar "with the Sheets till I hear from you on the subject; should you recommend it I could then send them out so as to appear in America nearly as early as in Europe, or if necessary, quite as early." He concluded by mentioning that he had "several Relatives in New York, the surviving children of my Uncle, the late Mr. Delafield," and asked to be remembered to them, "particularly Mr. Delafield the eldest brother of Dr. Edward Delafield." [11] This struck a personal note with John McVickar because his late wife's niece and namesake, Eliza Bard, had recently married Dr. Delafield's younger brother, Rufus King Delafield, and the families were bound by close ties of friendship.

The need for copyright became an increasingly important issue for such popular English novelists as Sir Edward Bulwer and the new favorite, Charles Dickens, whose serials of *Oliver Twist* were proving profitable to "pirates" reprinting them in America.

In December 1841 John Kenyon sent a letter to the professor and his family at Columbia, including, he took care to note, "my young friend Harry, your son, who should come and see us again." This letter was to introduce his friends, "Mr. and Mrs. Dickens," who were making their first trip to America. Charles Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop* had just added a fifth star to the galaxy of his novels. He would need no further introduction, Kenyon felt, except as being his friend. John Kenyon's intention was "more particularly to introduce Mrs. Dickens as one of those unpresuming spirits who will make no claims for herself. And one claim I will make for her," Kenyon observed, "is that she is the granddaughter of Mr. Thomson of Edinboro—still alive, the dear and kindly friend of Burns."

George Thomson, now in his eighty-fourth year, was known to McVickar through his published collections of Scottish, Welsh, and Irish airs. For these, such composers as Haydn and Beethoven had written accompaniments, while new words had been added by the poets Scott and Byron and by Robert Burns, to whom Kenyon referred. It was as a writer on musical subjects that Thomson's son-in-law, George Hogarth, first found employment on the *Morning Chronicle* in London a few months after McVickar had been there. And it was Hogarth who had encouraged young Charles Dickens by inserting his *Sketches of London Life* in the evening edition of this paper. Three years later Dickens had married his publisher's daughter, Catherine Thomson Hogarth.

"They are going southward," Kenyon wrote of Charles and Catherine Dickens, "where I have no friends. What I wish to procure for them on their journey onward is not the opportunity of gay societies—of which they will have more than enough—but to give them, and particularly Mrs. Dickens, the opportunity of knowing a few quiet friendly persons who will offer quiet conversation and any information which may be useful—more particularly to a lady traveling in a new country." [12]

In January 1842 Charles Dickens landed at Boston with letters from John Kenyon to George Ticknor, the Spanish historian, Charles Sumner, and others. They admitted him, as they had Professor McVickar, to a meeting of their Wednesday Evening Club and took him out to Harvard where he declared, "The Professors of the Cambridge university, Longfellow, Felton, Jared Sparks, are noble fellows." He also visited the mills and factories in Lowell, as McVickar had done in 1836, and seemed well impressed.

During his subsequent sojourn in New York, Dickens saw much of Irving and even journeyed up to Sunnyside for a visit. Two of his visiting cards are among the McVickar papers but there is no evidence of the two men having met in more than a public way. Dickens complained, however, "I can do nothing that I want to do, go nowhere I want to go, and see nothing that I want to see." The "Boz Ball" at the Park Theater and a dinner at the City Hotel were the two public events, but there were private parties and inspection tours to satisfy Dickens' instinct as a reporter. Although in the end Kate Dickens had an ulcerated sore throat which delayed their departure for Philadelphia until March 6, it is hard to explain why there had not been opportunity for Mrs. Dickens to meet the McVickar family as John Kenyon had planned—unless letters had miscarried.

McVickar received a note written on February 28 from Carlton House, where the visitors were put up, saying that "Mr. Charles Dickens presents his compliments to the Reverend Professor McVickar, and in forwarding the enclosed letter of Introduction" (possibly from John Kenyon) "begs to say that he deferred doing so until he left the city as every moment of his time was fully occupied during the whole period of his stay, and he did not wish to trouble Mr. McVickar unnecessarily." [13]

Had Dickens made the acquaintance of men like John McVickar and other members of the Club, he might not have exploded on his return to England, "I do not know the American gentleman, God forgive me for putting two such words together." It was some satisfaction to McVickar, however, since he was provisional president of Columbia when Dickens visited New York, to have Dickens write of American colleges that they "disseminate no prejudices; rear no bigots; dig buried ashes of no old superstitions; . . . exclude no man because of his religious opinions; above all in their whole course of study and instruction, recognize a world, and a broad one too, lying beyond the college walls."

In the midst of the confusion of the New York reception, Dickens was approached by a group of writers working for international copyright which must have included John McVickar. He was encouraged by them to speak boldly for this cause, and before he left the city he had in his portmanteau "a petition for an international copyright law, signed by all the best American writers with Washington Irving at their head." [14]

* * *

In America, the New England Transcendentalists were becoming increasingly well known. McVickar was not in sympathy with them. His opposition was not to their radicalism, for he was in every sense a reformer himself and enjoyed the companionship of many who inveighed against the *status quo*. What McVickar could not tolerate was the faulty scholarship whereby, either through lack of sufficient research or intentional withholding of facts, an author endeavored to color another man's writing to harmonize with his own views. This, he felt, was what the Transcendentalists were doing with Coleridge's writings. With his usual fervor he took his stand—one that did not find favor in all quarters. But the tribute Coleridge's nephew paid him—though disagreeing with him—was as much for his integrity of reason as for his power of expression.

An important influence on the Transcendentalists had been an edition of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* brought out by a Congregational minister, James Marsh, then president of the University of Vermont. In his preface Marsh had sought to modify Calvinism in a way to make it "satisfy the heart as well as the head" and in doing so had, to John McVickar's mind, contorted Coleridge's fundamental premises. The edition appeared in America just before McVickar visited Coleridge in 1830, and now, ten years later, an opportunity to state his objections offered when the professor was asked to write an introduction for a new English edition.

The result was a "Preliminary Essay" written by John McVickar for this new edition of *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly character, on the several grounds of Prudence, Morality and Religion* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was published by

William Pickering, who was putting out a fifty-three-volume edition of the English poets under the trademark of the Aldine Press, and reprinted in New York. The "Preliminary Essay" ventured to correct an impression created by the Marsh preface. The impression was serious because it had resulted in a Coleridge cult which appeared to be purely philosophical. Certainly, McVickar pointed out, it was devoid of any connection with the religion expressed through the Church of England of which the poet-philosopher was a communicant. Coleridge's last publication, appearing the year McVickar had talked with him in London, was *On the Constitution of Church and State* and showed how seriously the author counted the church's teaching as a basis for his own thinking.[15]

Coleridge's nephew and literary executor, Henry Nelson Coleridge, had published under the title of *Table Talk* personal recollections of the poet, and was the first editor of his uncle's works. He wrote to thank McVickar for the present of "your reprint of the *Aids to Reflection.*" He spoke of McVickar's preface as "very spirited, eloquent and likely to popularize the volume to readers generally, especially to such of them as are members of the Church of England." He then went on to question two or three paragraphs from which he protested, "If I understand their import correctly, I dissent both on my own conviction & as being confident that they are contrary to Coleridge's mind."

He agreed with McVickar that "Christianity is not indeed a theory or speculation to the Christian, it has no dogmas merely speculative, that is for intellectual speculation only as their object & purpose; it is to the individual a living process & not a mere philosophy." He admitted it was "the excellence of Coleridge to accept all this, but," he explained to McVickar, he feared a "misconception of Coleridge's views arising out of the just influence of your name & the remarkable talent displayed in the preface itself." [16]

"The true question to be decided between the two editions," as Professor McVickar expressed it in the columns of a current periodical, was "briefly this: Is Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*—which, be it remembered is his chief religious work, to be so edited before the American public as to conceal or bring forth his settled judgments touching the Church, its ministry, liturgy and Sacraments? Is the American student who seeks religious guidance in this work, to be left in the dark as to what in England, on the other hand, there was no need to communicate, whether his teacher were a churchman, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist or a Quaker? Is Coleridge, in short, most rightfully exhibited to the inquirer as the advocate of the Gospel without the Church, or of the Gospel in the Church?"

According to John McVickar, "Dr. Marsh's Preliminary Essay, with all its acknowledged ability, does leave this matter in the dark—the substituted one with all its alleged deficiencies, does *not* so leave it." [17]

Though he disagreed with the Transcendentalists, Professor McVickar had high regard for the evidence of scholarship in the works of other New England writers, particularly William Hickling Prescott, who in spite of his blindness had produced the *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*. He commended his friend Irving for discontinuing a manuscript on the history of Mexico when he learned that Prescott had begun writing on the same subject. Further, as a member of the committee for conferring honorary degrees, McVickar arranged for Prescott to receive Columbia's LL.D. in 1840. And there were, of course, the monumental works of his colleague, Jared Sparks.

Sparks had married again and was living in a large house near the Harvard Yard. Before going abroad that summer he had asked McVickar for letters to his friends in England. Thus Sir Robert Inglis, having only just returned from Greece, wrote McVickar that "Mr. Sparks called in our absence & left your parcel. He did not leave his address and I have been too few days in England to have as yet found him out." But he added, "He had an European reputation." Although Sir Robert had planned to visit the McVickars in New York he finally wrote, "In the judgement of Sir Benj. Brodie an accident, as it is called, which I encountered produced such consequences as rendered it unfit for me to risk the joltings of a possibly stormy passage." He rejoiced, however, that since the transatlantic crossing had "lost its uncertainties and difficulties, it had brought the two christian people of the world into such easy & almost daily intercourse." [18]

The reason Sir Robert could not find the Harvard professor was perhaps explained by an earlier letter from Henry Coleridge who wrote McVickar expressing his "great pleasure in meeting Mr. Sparks" and adding that he "is deep in the MSS of the British museum." Coleridge expressed to McVickar in April the wish that "it were thought worth while to publish the *Friend* in America," [19] and now four months later he was sending him the last edition of his uncle's series of essays with a corrected text and in some parts an altered arrangement.[20]

In the summer of 1838 the professor sent his nephew, John Bard, abroad with his son, Henry McVickar. Among those to whom they carried letters of introduction was John Kenyon. He and John McVickar had come first to know each other at Cambridge when Kenyon and Prof Mac's brother Archibald were undergraduates together at Peterhouse. Kenyon, the orphan of wealthy planters in Jamaica, was just coming of age in that year of 1805. He left college without a degree to marry and settle at Woodlands in Somerset, where his house had since been open to the McVickars and their friends from America. He had become known as a literary patron and had extended his charity to the Coleridge family and others. During McVickar's second visit to Europe, Kenyon was in Italy with Walter Savage Landor, who later wrote *Orestes at Delphi* under his roof.

From what John Kenyon now wrote of "my young friend Harry," the two boys were given entree to a stimulating literary circle. Browning had just dedicated his *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* to Kenyon and had sent him from Italy his *Andrea del Sarto* in lieu of a picture. Kenyon was bringing out a volume of his own poems at the time and encouraging his cousin Elizabeth Barrett to publish her first serious effort in this field. He was interesting his friends, such as Wordsworth and others, in her career, and for his own part he planned to tour France with the poet laureate Robert Southey.[21]

It was Kenyon who encouraged the correspondence between his cousin Elizabeth Barrett and his one-time schoolmate in Bristol, Robert Browning, a correspondence which eventually brought the two sympathetic spirits together. Kenyon also tried to ameliorate the domestic difficulties in the Dickens family, with whom he was on intimate terms, and to some he seemed to resemble Charles Dickens' own creation, Mr. Pickwick. Henry Crabb Robinson described John Kenyon as having "the face of a Benedictine monk and the joyous talk of a good fellow."

One of Professor McVickar's letters from Kenyon in 1843, recalling how Henry McVickar's "amiable manners made him our friend," noted the death of Sir Charles Morgan and suggested that Henry would undoubtedly remember Lady Morgan, the Irish novelist, who had entertained him. "Not above three weeks since," Kenyon went on to relate, "I dined at Macready's with Mr. Rogers & his sister, whom I think you knew;—"

John McVickar was particularly interested in the romantic actor whom Kenyon mentioned in this letter, because he had seen William Charles Macready on his American tour seventeen years ago. Moreover, there was a recent rumor of a quarrel between Macready and Robert Browning, whose *Blot on the 'Scutcheon* he was producing at the Drury Lane. He it was who had first suggested that Browning turn to playwriting. The great actor was now contemplating another visit to the United States, and Kenyon proposed to send his letter, by way of introduction to McVickar, "by the hands of my friend Mr. Macready."

"He is a Scholar and a Gentleman in the best sense of that word," he assured the professor, "knowing I have no doubt many of your English friends about whom he will tell you." Kenyon noted this because, he explained, he was "habitually shy of giving letters where I do not perceive or fancy what Philosopher Square calls the 'fitness of things.' "[22]

John Kenyon also wrote McVickar that "in arranging my small library here I put your books on the shelves which I am fond of making little altars of friendly memories," adding, the last American friend he had received to entertain was "Dr. Howe of Boston." McVickar had known the philanthropist Samuel Gridley Howe because of his pioneering efforts to educate the blind and feeble-minded. More personally he had known the daughter of the New York banker whom Howe had just married and taken abroad for a year's honeymoon. Julia Ward Howe was twenty years younger than her husband, and it was an equal number of years before she would be known as the author of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic.*

* * *

Washington Irving was four years older than John McVickar and their characters were as different as their careers. McVickar had never attempted the sort of romantic fiction that had made Irving popular and their styles of biographical writing bore little similarity. Yet the two men had much in common. One a bachelor, the other a widower, they had both taken under their neighboring roofs younger members of their respective families. Many mutual friends in New York City where they had grown up together, and more particularly in England where Irving had shown his friend many courtesies, were now a constant bond. During the seven last years of Irving's life, when they lived within hailing distance of each other and no one else relatively nearby, McVickar was probably Washington Irving's most intimate companion.

The remuneration from writing for John Jacob Astor had helped Irving purchase a small place on the Hudson in 1835. But only after his final return from abroad had Irving settled himself into this "cramped and crowded little erie," which amused Philip Hone and other friends who visited him there on the southern boundary of Tarrytown. He was bringing out his *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* and was deep in the study of Arabian history in preparation for *Mohamet and His Successors.* John McVickar enjoyed talking with Irving about his literary work, for he was himself planning to return to the biographical writing he had started so auspiciously with the *Domestic Narrative of Dr. Bard.* There was a third volume of the *Life of Bishop Hobart* he had never been given leisure to complete. On occasions when he would be visiting in the neighborhood he would stop in on his friend Irving and dream of such a literary retreat for himself. By 1851 Washington Irving was deriving a sizable income from a revived sale of his books and was contemplating a final magnum opus.

Meanwhile, McVickar had bought a house in Morristown, New Jersey, hoping that the invigorating climate of this area would benefit the health of his invalid son, Henry. There too lived his widowed daughter, Frances Pendleton Kneeland, with her four children. In 1852 they were joined by the professor's youngest son, William Augustus, who after completing his studies and traveling abroad had come to serve his deaconate year at St. Peter's Church.[23] Of this time William later wrote, "In this old-fashioned house of what was then an old-fashioned town—it was a period of great peacefullness as we watched the two, the widowed daughter and a noble hearted, sweet spirited son, broken down by over devotion to missionary work, pass away almost together."[24] The double loss weighed heavily on Professor McVickar for some time. The little orphans, three girls and a boy between the ages of twelve and five, made a sad procession as they returned to their grandfather's quarters at "No. 8 Columbia College," but he at once resolved to make a new home for them in the country.

He was persuaded to purchase a place on the east bank of the Hudson north of the country home of Alexander Hamilton, and south of Washington Irving's "Sunnyside." This was part of Justus Dearman's farm which McVickar's nephew, John Jay, had recently bought and laid out in lots as the village of Dearman. The professor told of visiting "with Mr. Dearman as I have been whenever up."[25] McVickar's new country house was later described as "a low, square, stone house with a piazza all around" and stood on a tongue of level ground between two richly wooded ravines. Uniting below the house, these gave some little foreground between it and the water. To the east about thirty well-planted acres rose in gradual and undulating slope a quarter of a mile up to the old Albany Post Road. To this summer home professor McVickar gave the name of "Inwood," after the house he had once built for his bride north of Dr. Bard's "Hyde Park." It was pleasant to be near the many other New York families who had come to live in that Tarrytown neighborhood.

August 10 of 1857 brought John McVickar to the biblical age of three score and ten, and it called for more than the usual family reunion at "Inwood." William Jay, his brother-in-law, wrote from Bedford regarding the intended assemblage, but pled that the state of his health prevented his attendance. In contrast he noted how the professor had been blessed in health and strength.[26] McVickar was at the time preparing a biography of William Jay's two sisters who had recently died. He had always upheld the effectiveness of teaching through biography and these two women he felt were "examples greatly needed, more especially in our age and country, where abounding wealth and the habits of corresponding self-indulgence are found so often to break down the christian graces of moderation and self-denial and consequently the means of liberal charity." [27]

When finally the biography was published in New York as *A Christian Memorial of Two Sisters,* William Jay wrote the author that it was "not only accurate in its statements, but that it is written with exceeding good taste. From scanty materials you have formed an interesting & useful memoir." [28] Among others, Henry John Whitehouse, one of Prof Mac's early students at Columbia who had now succeeded Philander Chase as bishop of Illinois, wrote in commendation of "the just and beautiful" biography, adding that he had "just received another honour connected with yourself, that of being on the Committee of Examination for your Department." [29]

That summer of 1857 Morgan Dix, who had been nominated for Columbia's chair of moral and intellectual philosophy, noted in his diary, "this morning left in train for Irvington to visit Dr. McVickar—place called Inwood." Dix described it as "beautifully situated and adjoins Washington Irving's seat Sunnyside. In the course of the morning we took a walk through the grounds and stopped at Mr. Irving's place and paid our respects." [30]

Certainly the little path between "Sunnyside" and "Inwood" became well worn. Because the McVickars' veranda commanded a better view of the Tappan Zee where the river widened out, three miles across and twenty to the north, Washington Irving was a frequent visitor. He even had certain trees on his own place cut back so that the two men could see more comfortably as they sat there and talked of mutual friends abroad and of Prof Mac's spiritual endeavors at home. Irving had formerly been a rather perfunctory Episcopalian, but now he began to share his new neighbor's enthusiasm; in the course of the next few years he became a warden of Christ Church, Tarrytown, a member of its finance committee, and a delegate to the diocesean conventions in New York City.

The secluded retreat twenty-odd miles from New York where John McVickar and Washington Irving were now to live the rest of their lives "on friendly and intimate terms," was being intruded upon by the New York and Harlem Railroad, which had pushed its tracks north on the east bank of the Hudson to Chatham-Four-Corners. There it connected with the Boston Albany Railroad. Because the track between the residences and the river was unguarded, the engineer considered it necessary to warn both man and beast of the train's approach. Finally McVickar and Irving appealed to Gouverneur Kemble, a director of the railway, as Irving put it, "to stop at all costs this abominable screeching of the locomotive." Kemble and John McVickar had been undergraduates together at Columbia and in the early days Irving had been among the literary group who immortalized Kemble's New Jersey mansion as "Cockloft Hall." Kemble could now be found not far away at Cold Spring, where he held open house every Saturday night.

The steam cars, nevertheless, proved a convenience to many visitors. Whether they came to see the popular author or the kindly professor of belles lettres and political economy, the two men were happy to share each others' guests. Among these were literary men from New York such as William Cullen Bryant and his associate, the future diplomat-author, John Bigelow; George William Curtis who was writing a gentle satire of New York social life under the title of the *Potipher Papers;* from New England Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edward Everett; and from abroad an occasional visitor of note. So much a literary center did the neighborhood become that Nathaniel Parker Willis decided to set up a country seat nearby to be called "Idlewild."

Willis's *Pencillings by the Way* was being published by Charles

Scribner that year. He heralded William Makepeace Thackeray as "about taking the bold step of coming over bodily to displace his idea—an experiment which Dickens and Kossuth found so disasterous." He described Thackeray as a "tall man, of large frame, & features roughly cast—the expression of his face rather 'no you dont' & Great Britainous, but withal very fearless & very honest—no symptom of dandy about him. He is satirical on the surface, genial at heart." [31]

McVickar and Irving were together in New York with Bancroft, Bryant, Halleck, Verplanck, and others to welcome the author who had just written *Henry Esmond*. Thackeray accepted an invitation to journey up the Hudson to Dearman and later described "Sunnyside" to his daughter as a "funny little in-and-out-cottage—little bits of small parlours where we were served with cakes and wine,—with a little study not much bigger than my back room, with odd dogs trotting about the premises, with flocks of ducks sailing on the ponds,—a very pleasant patriarchial life." [32]

McVickar and Irving shared a common interest in libraries. They were both familiar with the operation of public libraries abroad. From London word came that McVickar's friend, Joshua Bates (who as senior partner of Baring Brothers was now probably the most influential foreigner in private life in England) was proposing to endow a public library for Boston, Massachusetts.

In New York, the merger of the City (Society) Library and the Athenaeum on May 16, 1838 with John McVickar as president resulted two years later in a new building for the library on the corner of Broadway and Leonard Street. As Dr. Bard had reassembled the books of this library after the Revolution, so his son-in-law felt a satisfaction in living up to tradition by having the books returned from the Mechanics Society where they had been stored. This had let to discussions at the Club as to the choice of books for a public library. James Kent prepared a list for general reading which was published. Chancellor Kent was at this time in retirement at what he called a "charming country seat at my Summit Lodge" in New Jersey. His contact with the social life of the city was still preserved, however, as when he noted having gone "to the old Club at Dr. McVickar's." [33]

Whether it was Columbia's first library building or a theological library for the General Seminary or lending libraries for schools and missions—whatever organization claimed Professor McVickar's attention, the need for a library was to his mind essential. When the time came for planning a new public library for New York City, it became the topic of many animated conversations on the veranda at "Inwood" or in the little "Sunnyside" study. It had been five years since John Jacob Astor had been persuaded to leave $400,000 for its endowment. And now in 1854 what was long to be known as the Astor Library was to be opened to the public with Washington Irving as its first president.

Early in the following year Irving showed McVickar the first volume of his *Life of George Washington*—and for each of the succeeding years another volume appeared until the work was completed in March 1859, eight months before he died. Prof Mac felt the separation keenly because the companionship of letters was with him one of the strongest bonds of friendship. When the summer vacation permitted him to return to "Inwood," he would miss the familiar figure of his friend briskly mounting the path from "Sunnyside" in his "oldfashioned black summer dress, with 'pumps' and white stockings, and broad Panama hat" and the sound of his throaty greeting as he took his accustomed seat on the veranda.

CHAPTER 4

Politics and Economics

Letters from Inglis, Nassau Senior, Hume, and Whately . . . Lessons and Lectures in Political Economy . . . "At Home" to the Future Napoleon III . . . A Free Banking System for America

British parliamentarians, religious leaders, and men of letters came to look on the Columbia professor as able not only to inform them about American affairs, but also—because he was far enough removed from their scene to be objective—to offer sound and useful comments on trends in England. McVickar met this challenge satisfactorily, judging by the extent and far-ranging subject matter of his correspondence with British friends. In turn, his opinions were the more valued by Americans because of his foreign contacts.

Personal contact with prominent politicians and business men McVickar considered important in a tightening world. He had come to appreciate how such relationships not only in his own country but also abroad promoted a friendly attitude. He agreed with what Sir Robert Inglis had recently written him on this matter, "that tariffs, boundaries and searches, which continued as international problems, would scarcely engender strife; and war if it must come would lose half its evil being undertaken in sorrow."

Sir Robert's words of farewell at Battersea Rise on the McVickars' departure from England had been, "Send us such friends as yourselves from your country, you are better than any treaties of peace." Nor did he fail to preserve the contact as time went on. "Here for the last five months," Inglis wrote McVickar in July

1831, "(since the disturbances, I might almost say insurrection, ceased) we have been bubbling & boiling in the caldron of reform. Never was a measure of such an extent prepared so hastily and offered so unexpectedly to any people. A tenth part of it would have satisfied nine tenths of the reformers. A constitution which six centuries have formed is to be replaced by the work of three months." Shortly after there arrived at "No. 8 Columbia" a copy of the speech Sir Robert made "in answer to Lord John Russell on the first introduction of his bill." [1] Although Sir Robert was hardly a year older than McVickar, he was an old-fashioned Tory and a strong churchman. Because he represented the feelings and opinions of the country gentlemen as against the rising class of manufacturers, Inglis was to wield considerable influence in the House of Commons for another twenty-three years. As adherents of the old order, he and his sympathizers feared the changes which must come if the Reform Bill were passed. Successful at first in blocking it, they finally had to accept defeat when the Reform Bill was enacted in 1832.

McVickar was fortunate that he had met men of all shades of political opinion on his visit to England. Thus to Inglis' reports on the Reform Bill were added comments from men with different views. Nassau William Senior, who had just accepted the chair of political economy at King's College, London, wrote, "You will perhaps like to hear what the educated part of the London public think of the Reform Bill.

"We think the destructive part good. We rejoice over the rotten boroughs & the corporations, but we do not like the low franchise, the absence of ballot or the anomalous proportions of members to numbers & property.

"We think that it countenances the unhappy prejudice that the different classes of the people have distinct if not hostile interests. And we think that the ultimate consequence will be that when the inconveniences of the present intended system have become manifested by experience we shall be forced to resort to district representation & ballot with a low instead of a high qualification.

"It is doubtful, however, whether after having so long dealt in protections & bounties & other theories & practices, arming one interest against another, we could have succeeded in obtaining at once a simple form of representation."

Mr. Senior, who was now generally regarded as the leading English economist, referred to "an article on reform in the last North American Review" saying that it had excited much interest in England. And further, he asked McVickar, "Who is the Tarrifite & Sadlerite who has reviewed me in the same number in the true spirit of our English party magazine?" Also he called McVickar's attention to the fact that "the new administration contains many of our common friends—Lord Lansdowne, Spring-Rice, Villiers, Parnell & as an offshoot, Horton. I believe in the good intentions of all the cabinet, in the talents of many & in the knowledge of a few, but they are lamentably deficient in tact & the power of managing & getting through business.

"They must stand, however, as the last administration did until the Duke of Wellington kicked it down by his declaration against reform, from the difficulty of finding successors." And in conclusion the British economist felt "that we shall remain at peace, though the perversness of all other parties, religious, Dutch & French is very teasing." [2]

Still another view came from the member for Middlesex, whose re-election McVickar had witnessed during his stay in England. Joseph Hume, McVickar noted, had added the word, *retrenchment,* to his radical program of "peace and reform." John McVickar had come to respect this reformer who was to hold his seat for another five years and to be twice elected rector of Aberdeen University. They corresponded together on matters of common interest on both sides of the Atlantic such as international copyright, the opening up of East India trade, and the possibility of abolishing slavery in British colonies as had been done five years earlier in New York State. "Your letter by the Ship Hannibal together with the Volume on Patents and on Shipping," Hume wrote on January 23, 1832, "are very acceptable. I have sent you a large parcel containing the whole of the evidence taken before the select committee on East India affairs, which with the appendix now sent completes all we have before Parliament at the present, but the committee will be re-appointed in a few days to proceed with the evidence which I shall forward you when printed."

"At present" Hume explained, "we are busy with reform and until that is settled we will do little public business. You will observe that great efforts have been made to prevent the Bill passing, but the state in which the Country is, will render it impossible any longer to delay that measure which must lead to most important changes in this Country." [3]

In 1833 Sir Robert Inglis wrote McVickar of "having seen shortly before his death in London our admirable friend, Mr. Wilberforce." He described his funeral as a bright spot in the national character. "Men of all ranks, parties and creeds concurred in doing honor to him,—some from gratitude for his book, some from admiration for his christian character, others, perhaps the much larger number, from sympathy with his views in the abolition of the slave-trade; but still, round his grave there they all stood, united for once in one common object,—two of our royal dukes who differ in politics, also the Duke of Wellington and Lord Brougham, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Althorp; a High-churchman and a Socinian, a Methodist and a Roman Catholic."

Having attended his funeral, Sir Robert wrote, he had gone to Clifton, as McVickar had done three years before, "to see the last one of Wilberforce's most intimate friends, with whom indeed he had taken counsel for nearly half a century, our venerable friend, Mrs. Hannah More." She survived him only by a few days. Sir Robert wrote at length of the death of Hannah More in the eighty-ninth year of her life, with the explanation to McVickar that "knowing the value you attach to both, I have no scruple in giving you these details." The professor later learned that in her will his venerable friend left thirty thousand pounds to religious societies and charitable institutions.

From Inglis, McVickar heard later of the British attitude to the slavery issue in America. McVickar had been concerned with this issue since early in his career. He had not joined the Abolitionist party but there was no question in his mind that economically as well as morally slavery was intolerable. Sir Robert Inglis wrote him that in England they looked "with increasing regret to the state of the slavery question in parts of your great nation." He seemed to understand "that there are many in the southern states who would thankfully give half of all which they possess in the world, to be able to combine the security of the other half with freedom to their slaves, but they feel that to give freedom and consequently power to the negro, would not only destroy their property but hazard their lives. We know all this," he assured McVickar, "because we have ourselves gone through it all in our own West Indies. Still the United States as a great nation, will not stand quite right with the old world until the discrepancy between the first Articles of her Declaration and the condition of slavery within the borders of every state which is party to that Declaration shall be removed." [4] To this McVickar replied that he hoped a solution might be reached by means of universal education, but he feared there was every danger of it coming to an impasse as a political issue.

It is to Inglis' credit that in reporting the effects of the Reform Act of 1832 he was willing to admit that some of the consequences at least had been less upsetting than he had anticipated. Among other things, he had feared that the members who would be elected by the more popular constituencies would be demagogues, securing their election by inflammatory harangues and maintaining the support of their constituents by similar continuous declamation in the House of Commons.

"On the contrary," he now wrote his American friend in 1833, "many of the new manufacturing boroughs have sent regular old gentlemen who never open their mouths. One of them, Mr. Sheppard of Troue (a relation by the bye of the author of that excellent work *Thoughts on Devotion*) is the only man in the whole house who wears a tail of hair with powder. He also has top-boots, and looks in short, as a member for Gloucestershire might have done forty years ago. Some have sent men distinguished already. Leeds for instance has returned Macaulay; but generally speaking they have elected the leading manufacturer of the neighbourhood, or perhaps somewhat inconsistently some young barrister who has attended their sessions and propitiated the leading attorneys."[5]

Inglis had just delivered a notable report of the Commission on Public Records and denounced the suggested ecclesiastical reform in Ireland. Therefore it was interesting for McVickar to have his friend's own description of the occasion in the House of Commons. "When Lord Althorp opened his plan of Irish church reform there was almost a shout of delight at the idea of getting rid of ten bishops," whose sees in Ireland would thereby be suppressed.

Among the Irish prelates was another of the professor's English friends, Richard Whately, who the year after the two economists had met in Oxford had been called to be the archbishop of Dublin. He now wrote McVickar to say, "I have got thro a stormy session of Parlt as successfully as cd be hoped, all things considered, but much remains to be done towards healing the wounds of this troubled country & of our afflicted church."

Whately inquired as to an abridgment or selection from his "2nd series of essays," which William Rollinson Whittingham was to have sent him from New York. To his friend at Columbia Whately sent the first of his famous primers of *Economic Science* for the use of children. These *Easy Lessons on Money Matters,* he said, "were about to be translated into the languages of India & a cargo is already sent to Madras & to Ceylon & another to N.S. Wales."

"There have been many treatesies on the Art of War;" Whately reminded his economist colleague, "ours may I think be called the Art of Peace; for I am persuaded that a just view of P. Economy & of Xty wd, hand in hand, persuade all people to beat their swords into ploughshares. At Harvard Coll. they have not yet, I believe a professor of the Science, but they have done me the honor to send me in the handsomest manner a diploma of the D.D. degree. Translations of my works into German are in a course of publication at Cologne."[6]

McVickar admired Richard Whately for endowing out of his private purse a chair of political economy at Trinity College, Dublin, immediately after his appointment in 1831, but then anything for the good of the Irish homeland of the Moores and McVickars appealed to Prof Mac.

* * *

McVickar was not satisfied to communicate his theories on political economy to other economists and to statesmen—he wanted to reach a wider audience. His publications addressed to the primary school level were read and appreciated by many adults who had never studied the new science. In this undertaking he had the encouragement of practical men abroad, while at home it stimulated others to think and write on the subject.

In 1835 John McVickar published his *First Lessons in Political Economy, for the use of primary and common schools,* much as Archbishop Whately was doing in Ireland.[7] However, McVickar owed his venture to the suggestion of Joshua Bates of Baring Brothers, who had written some time earlier to comment on McVickar's *Introductory Lectures.* Bates advised the Professor, "The views you inculcate are most correct and I hope you will be able either by publication or lectures to spread a knowledge of political economy among the middle classes in the United States and thus prevent their sending shallow demagogues to our legislative assemblies. I have tho't much for a busy man on the same subject, it appeared to me cheap tracts would be one good way of conveying this sort of knowledge. But I am sure you will find out some way of doing it, and it will be conferring the greatest possible benefit on your country." [8]

McVickar's *First Lessons in Political Economy* were well received. Among others Mayhew Wainwright, now in Boston, found the book of practical use "with a youthful class" in Trinity Church. From Stockbridge, Susan Sedgwick acknowledged McVickar's "little book on Political Economy. It is a subject that finds warm admirers with us," she wrote, "and all must perceive the truth, simplicity and apt illustration with which you have presented it." [9] It was the year following that her husband, Theodore Sedgwick, began publishing his three volumes on *Public and Private Economy.* Jared Sparks, now bringing out the first of his twelve volumes of *The Writings of George Washington,* wrote commending McVickar's treatise, as did his friend Edward Everett, then governor of Massachusetts. In short, McVickar's book was so much in demand that another enlarged edition was soon published in Albany by the Common School Depository.

McVickar's discourses on economics involved a constant exchange of ideas with his friends in England. In 1834 he congratulated Malthus on becoming professor of political economy at Hailebury College. He received communications from members of the London Political Economy Club, such as "Mr. Spring Rice presents his Compliments to Professor McVickar and begs to transmit a copy of his speech on the Repeal of the Union." [10] Thomas Spring Rice was just completing a term of four years as secretary of the treasury in Grey's administration and was about to enter a service of equal duration as Chancellor of the Exchequer under Melbourne.

Sir Henry Parnell (who was to serve as treasurer of the Ordnance and Navy and make such able contributions to government financing that he was created Baron Congleton) wrote his American colleague in 1834, "I read your pamphlet on banking with great attention but I cannot agree with you in thinking that this trade stands in need of restrictions. After, however, it has been for a long time established under them, it is difficult to get rid of them." He went on to suggest "that if a law were passed in the United States to repeal every existing legislative enactment after a certain time, say three years, & to require that no note should be issued for a smaller sum than four dollars, a sound system of banking would be the result."

He called John McVickar's attention to an article he had published in an early number of *Taits Edinburgh Magazine* in which he said, "I fully developed the argument on which I maintain that free trade in banking ought to be admitted as well as in everything else. The renewal of the Bank of England's charter last year has put a stop here to all discussion of the subject of banking. Apparently everything is going on well in our paper system, but we have a great risk to encounter from the operations of Lord Althorp's measure of allowing Bank of England notes to be a tender for payment of private bank notes." [11] Although McVickar had been vouched for by Lord Althorp at the Political Economy Club in London, they were not always at one in matters of banking.

Before leaving London, McVickar had engaged with a publisher in St. James's Street, John Miller, to bring out his *Introductory Lecture to a course of Political Economy* as a book, and later had sent him ten copies of the *Life of Dr. Bard* also to be sold in England. Further, Miller handled such things as certain "Documents promised by Sir Henry Parnell," who was at that time "Secretary at War." These papers, Miller advised the professor in 1831, "greatly exceed in bulk what you expected, they fill a very large case and are shipped by the Ontario." [12]

It seemed obvious to McVickar in 1832 that the second United States bank was inadequate, and accordingly he proposed a new banking system to Louis McLane, whom he had come to know at the American legation in London. McLane, now secretary of Treasury in Washington, was urging the rechartering of the Bank of the United States. He wrote McVickar on March 3, 1832 his "thanks for your letter of the 28th ult. inclosing a proposition for a new banking company. I should entertain great respect for any system," McLane added, "proceeding from your deliberate research and examination, and receiving the approbation of yourself and the intelligent men around you."

A congressional committee appointed to look into the matter was submitting many questions to Nicholas Biddle, who had for the past thirteen years been director of the Bank of the United States. Their chairman, Churchill Caldom Cambreleng the distinguished banking authority, wrote John McVickar on May 4 to say he was "permitted by the committee to submit them also to other gentlemen, and I know of no one who understands the subject better than you do. You will oblige me at your leisure, by looking them over and making such suggestions as you may think proper." [13] Gallatin made his contribution by writing *Considerations on the Currency and Banking System of the United States,* which Biddle used as a campaign document on behalf of the United States Bank.

Regard for McVickar's research in matters of history and of economics spread beyond the northern border of his own country. In 1832 he had been elected a corresponding member of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, which published information on the natural, civil, and literary history of British North America. At the same time from London came a package from the British Poor Law Commission Office. The Commission expressed its indebtedness by presenting McVickar with a "book for enquiring into the practical operation of the Poor Laws," adding that "the commissioners will be greatly obliged to Dr. McVickar for any papers or information on the subject of public provision for the poor in America."

In 1835, an appealing request came from Prof Mac's economist friend, Nassau William Senior, asking McVickar to look out for his brother John, ("a very *mauvais sujet,*" he wrote), who had been sent to the "Belle Vue Insane Hospital, New York." In the same letter he informed his American colleague he was sending him "a pamphlet of mine on the present state of affairs here." This was a notable report Nassau Senior had presented as a member of the Poor Law Commission. He felt it was "important as having been written by me in concert with Lord Lansdowne & representing his opinions as well as mine, but," he added, "this is a secret." [14]

In those days of poor and slow communication across the Atlantic, Americans depended on private correspondence for the kind of information which in the later days of radio, electronic tape, and jet planes would be transmitted immediately. A bill of equal importance to the Reform Act of 1832 (which a century later would be discussed in the *New York Times*) had in the 1830's not only delayed but often inaccurate coverage in the American press. Thus, for an American, John McVickar must have been uniquely well informed about developments in England as a result of his foreign correspondence. Though his comments and replies are not available, we must assume that they were of great interest to their recipients, if only from the fact that they continued to write for so many years after they had first met the professor.

* * *

Correspondence with overseas friends formed one of the most important links between cosmopolitan Americans such as John McVickar and their counterparts in England and the Continent. From time to time, however, an opportunity for more direct contact offered. The Club was always eager to extend hospitality to foreign visitors from whom they might learn of trends abroad. In the spring of 1837 it played host to a controversial young Frenchman, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of the Emperor Napoleon. At a time when the name of Bonaparte was somewhat less than popular in ruling circles in France, Louis Napoleon had engaged in political activities which had caused King Louis Philippe some concern. As a result Louis Napoleon was placed aboard a ship bound for America—an unobtrusive means of removing him from the political scene in France.

Following the usual order of the weekly Club gatherings, it happened to be John McVickar's turn to entertain the group in his residence at the west end of the old Columbia buildings. All day under the watchful eye of aunt Sally Bard, now over eighty years old, the house had been in a turmoil of preparation. She had able assistants in Prof Mac's four daughters. Mary, the eldest then living, was nineteen and faithfully carried on the gracious touches of Georgian culture which she and her mother had brought home from their eight months' residence abroad. To this Frances, a year junior to her sister, added some new ideas from what she had recently seen in Boston. Aunt Sally's namesake, Sarah Bard, who was sixteen, and finally the youngest of the sisters, Susan, fourteen, just helped.

Red satin draperies which hung in heavy folds from scalloped lambrequins over the windows in the front parlor on the first floor had to be shaken out and brushed. The lace curtains had already been freshened. Linen coverings were to be removed from the horsehair sofa and ottomans, and certain carved pieces, treasured because of their association with the old house at Hyde Park, needed an extra polishing. The marble mantlepiece with its porcelain *objet d'arts* and bronze candelabra dripping with crystal pendants was Mary's special concern, as was the glass cabinet which contained so many of the curios they had brought from Europe. There was a sixteenth century *varguino* of dark chestnut with ivory columns set in its simulated palace-front which the younger children felt peculiarly their own, for in bringing it overseas Prof Mac had hidden behind its secret panels gifts for each one of them.

Years later William McVickar recalled this "goodly home at college" as the "scene of much pleasant and intellectual society. *The Club,* as it was called and familiarly known by old New Yorkers, met there regularly in its appointed turn." He described it as "a dignified assemblage confined to twelve members and composed of such men as Peter Jay, Judge Kent, Dr. John A. Smith, etc., and the rule of the Club that each member may bring to the meeting one distinguished stranger, insured always sufficient novelty to keep the conversation fresh and make this weekly gathering one of real interest." Among others he remembered "at one of these meetings at our house the present Emperor of France was a guest." [15]

The old trees which Sam Bard had planted years ago in the Columbia campus formed a green haze of new leaves, and the shrubs Prof Mac had himself put out were already in flower.[16] From an upper window in "No. 8" the professor's ten-year-old son William could see some of the members forming in animated groups near the low stoop of his entry, lingering in the warm spring afternoon until all should arrive.

During the past decade there had been little need for change in their membership. They were all that much older, John McVickar thought, as he came out on the steps to greet them, and the better for it. Albert Gallatin was now seventy-six, but the rest were for the most part younger. There were the legal experts, William Johnson and Chancellor Kent; Professor Renwick, whose residence was in another wing of the Columbia building, was also coming, as was James Mathews, who would likely be walking down from New York University with Samuel Morse. From the new location of the College of Physicians and Surgeons on Crosby Street, Augustine Smith was on his way, while the business representatives, Henry Brevoort, Jonathan Goodhue, and Prof Mac's cousin Henry Casimir DeRham were also close by.

Two of the members could not attend: Nathaniel Moore was on an extended tour abroad, as was Mayhew Wainwright, who on his return was due to join the staff of Trinity Church, New York. In addition to the regular members there were a number of distinguished guests. But now the boy in the upper window could see Chancellor Kent crossing the green with the unpretentious Frenchman, barely thirty years old, whom he was bringing to the Club that evening.

Thirty years later Samuel Morse recalled that "on assembling the Chancellor introduced us to Louis Napoleon, a son of the ex-king of Holland, a young man pale and contemplative, somewhat reserved. This reserve we generally attributed to a supposed imperfect acquaintance with our language. In the course of the evening, while the conversation was general," Morse remembered that he "drew the attention of Mr. Gallatin to the stranger, observing that I did not trace any resemblance in his features to his world-renowned uncle, yet that his forehead indicated great intellect."

Morse recorded the former secretary of the Treasury as replying, "Yes, there is a great deal in that head of his, but he has a strange fancy. Can you believe it, he has the impression that he will one day be the Emperor of the French, can you conceive anything more ridiculous!" [17]

John McVickar's reaction to Gallatin's expression of incredulity was one of reservation. The duchess de Broglie in the course of her correspondence had sent McVickar, three years after his visit to France, Louis Napoleon's *Reveries Politiques,* and the professor's interest in political economy had led him to read in part the pretender's more recent volume, *Considerations politiques et militaires sur la Suisse.* It was obvious to McVickar, therefore, why Napoleon had been exiled, and it was with some embarrassment that he found himself in the position of entertaining an enemy of those who had entertained him in France.

The affairs of France were crowded from the minds of these responsible citizens that evening by the imminent domestic crisis which all agreed must come sooner or later. There had been financial speculation in the western territories when they were opened. McVickar himself had purchased considerable acreage in this undeveloped area as a result of his son's exploratory trip in Michigan. But financing had in many cases been reckless and had been accompanied by an inflation in bank note currency.

Louis Napoleon joined freely in the discussion, and William McVickar later heard his father tell in a tone of amusement of the future emperor's argument against the employment of paper money. In his somewhat broken English Napoleon had said, "I go out shooting, I load my gun, I put my hand in my pocket for a wad, I ram it down, I fire off my gun, and then I say, Bah! I've fired off ten dollars." [18]

According to the Club rules, there was "no set-supper" but in the dining room on the ground floor where the painting of Prof Mac's father hung over the mantelpiece there was a table extended to accommodate the members and their guests. This was tastefully laden in ample quantities with the prescribed "one dish of cold meat, some bread, butter, biscuit, cheese and fruit." And on the Sheraton sideboard in jugs and decanters were "the drinks—lemonade, claret and water, beer and cider." The candles, their light glittering in the silver and polished mahogany, had burned low in their sockets before the animated Club dispersed.

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McVickar's knowledge of banking was extensive, and it was practical as well as theoretical. He had made the most of opportunities to meet leading bankers at home and abroad and had discussed many aspects of banking with them. In addition to the economic phases of banking, he was only too aware of related moral issues. At a time when men could lose their whole fortune because an unscrupulous banker defaulted, McVickar recognized the need for protecting depositors against such dangers. He concluded that such protection could be secured only by government regulation, and in his customary fashion devoted his skill as a political economist and writer to urging such a measure.

Soon after the panic of 1837, John McVickar corresponded with Archbishop Whately and other economists abroad on possible preventive measures against the repetition of such a disaster. There was much to be learned from the *Statistical Account of the British Empire* being published by his friend John Ramsay M'Culloch. He also wrote Edward Everett on the "preservation of sound currency." Finally, he made his own contribution anonymously in what he called *An Essay Upon the Principles of Political Economy designed as a Manual for practical men by an American.*[19]

He looked for a new era of financial security in the passage of a Free Banking Act by the State of New York. The Act held that banking was a business in which all citizens might under proper regulations freely engage and proceeded to abolish all special legislative charters. Further it required that bank notes must be based on government or state bonds or other tangible security. These principles, which in time furnished the model for a national banking act, were to be applied under direct supervision of the state. It gave John McVickar no small satisfaction to compare his *Hints on Banking,* published almost a decade ago, with the new law. He found that the legislature had embodied "not only the ideas but almost the precise form of expression" in which he had offered his original recommendations in *A Letter to a Gentleman in Albany.*

The professor did not question the fact that the former unsecured currency of state banks was more profitable to the stockholders, but as he often indicated in his discussions on political economy, its security rested on the moral quality of those who managed the banks. Certain banks had failed for this reason. Under the free-banking system which McVickar had suggested, the depositors were entirely secured from loss by bonds lodged in the banking department of the state, beyond the control of the bank and held in trust to pay the bill holders if the bank should default.

The success of the measure brought John McVickar favorable comments from the increasing number of political economists in America, among them Henry Charles Carey, the American publisher for Carlyle, Irving, and Scott. Carey was now retiring from the Philadelphia publishing business inherited from his father to devote more time to economics. He was bringing out his volumes on *Principles of Political Economy* and sent McVickar his second, thanking him at the same time "for the kindness evinced in a review of the first which," he wrote, "proceeded I understand from your pen." [20]

Professor McVickar found it less easy to convey the importance of the subject to his classes at Columbia in the face of such reaction as Templeton Strong noted in the spring of the year. "Mack began his Political Economy, 'a solemn humbug' according to Coleridge, and according to Mack a very ridiculous humbug." But the student-critic allowed that his professor "imparteth his own spirit to everything he touches." Nevertheless, McVickar's host at the London Political Economy Club, Thomas Tooke, who was beginning a monumental work on the *History of Prices and the State of Circulation,* wrote his commendation of the free system, as did the professor's banking friends in Baring Brothers.

John McVickar's financial astuteness in the next few years came to have more of a national, if not international, significance. He had opposed Andrew Jackson's destruction of the United States Bank, and in 1841 after much serious study he published his conclusions in the *New York Review.* They were reprinted as a book entitled *A National Bank: its necessity and most Advisable Form.* Because his learning was admitted to be "extensive and accurate" and his character was such as to inspire "respect and veneration," this provocative work attracted wide attention. It was followed by a series of articles he was asked to contribute to the columns of the *New York American.*

McVickar's plea was for a national bank in which the issue department should be made distinct and separate from the discount department. "He there showed the practicability and necessity of having the issue of circulating notes independent of the discount department," as the banker John E. Williams later pointed out, "and proposed that it be under the charge of a board of governors, while other parts of the bank should still be managed by the directors." [21]

The immediate effect, as reported in the daily press, was that the Chamber of Commerce had a special meeting to discuss the expediency of referring the matter to a committee to prepare "a petition to Congress for the incorporation of a National Bank."

This was acted upon favorably, and to carry forward the idea a committee of five was appointed, including William Henry Aspinwall, a capitalist largely responsible for the Panama Railroad, and Jonathan Goodhue, a charter member of McVickar's Club. Another member of the Club, whose experience with national finances made him invaluable, was of course Albert Gallatin. Gallatin was then working on the regular settlement of exchange between banks, and that year was to receive from McVickar's hands at Columbia an honorary *LL.D.*

The principle which John McVickar evolved, that no bank should be permitted "to supply a circulating medium not secured to the public outside the bank itself," gained support in England where McVickar had an increasing number of correspondents in the banking world. Two or three years later, in the course of proposing amendments to the charter of the Bank of England, Sir Robert Peel, who was now forming a new ministry with himself as first lord of the Treasury, laid stress on the necessity of security for the bank's circulating notes. John E. Williams observed in reference to this, "If I mistake not, in the discussions which arose in Parliament on the subject of the Bank of England in 1844, reference was had to the Free Banking Law," a measure made effective in New York State in May of 1838, ten years after it was first suggested by John McVickar in his *Hints on Banking*. The reference was to show the members of Parliament "the feasability of limiting and securing the bank's issue beyond a peradventure." [22]

CHAPTER 5

Teaching America

Education and the New University of New York . . . The Last Days of Old Columbia . . . Graduate Schools at Columbia . . . A New College on the Hudson

THE detailed entries in McVickar's 1830 journal show that he returned from Europe remarkably well informed about the prevailing systems of advanced education abroad. He applied this knowledge to improve his own teaching methods and was rewarded by increased response and respect from his Columbia students. His attempts to bring his foreign experiences to bear on the faculty and trustees were less successful. But through his friendship with the members of the Club, who now pushed through their long-cherished plans for the formation of a new university in New York, he played an important, if indirect, role in the founding of this institution. Though he did not himself favor or join in the plans for the new university, his experience and knowledge of advanced education were available to those who did.

McVickar's annual college report at Columbia after his return from abroad stated that "the Professor now finds himself greatly aided by his recent acquaintance with the courses pursued in foreign universities, more especially with the University at Oxford." In regard to the "Logical and moral Department," for which McVickar was responsible, he reported that American education appeared to him most deficient. "In the English colleges, years instead of months are given to these studies," he explained, "and the result is that their studious young men go forth thoroughly instructed in moral and religious truth." Further, he pointed out, they were so well disciplined by daily habits of academic reasoning as to be fitted to cope with the difficulties which belong to all practical questions. "This, in a Republican Government," the professor maintained, "is all important." [1]

He wrote his brother Ben at this time, "The college goes on much as usual. The president,—courteous as ever, and Professor——, —cross as ever, but neither much affect me. I have full satisfactory duties of my own, partly in and partly out of college. In college my most agreeable is my new one, the course of Evidences (of Natural and Revealed Religion) which I have undertaken with the senior class." He had long considered that religion was the only solid basis for the development of a system of ethical values. And this he considered central to the conduct of all human affairs. His theory of political economy, his hope that an understanding of its principles could improve the lot of man, presupposed a society the members of which had a highly developed moral sense. To his mind, it was the prime function of education to develop this. For John McVickar there could be no actual division of religious and secular education—for the success of the latter depended on the former.

Professor McVickar's classes at the college were going smoothly, so that his annual report noted no occasion during the past year to order any individual before the board. Moreover, his slight form in a long black coat, the tousled hair showing grey under the high felt hat, was a popular figure at the "football" games which were coming to be accepted as a college sport at Columbia.

It was natural that on the death of one of the most loved members of the graduating class, William Moore DeRham, his fellow students should call on Prof Mac to address them. In the course of the address he advised the students to "concentrate your thought on the present duty whatever it be. The present hour, the present moment is all you have of life. The past is gone utterly, irretrievably; the future is not, and to you it may never be; *the present,* therefore, *calm and wise dispose.*"

Their professor told them that he counted it "among the mysteries of our probationary state, why, at the age when resolution is weakest, passion should be found the strongest." He suggested that to meet this situation "among the most practical means was to preoccupy the debatable ground of the human heart." He warned against "the idle mind" and the "vacant thought" likening them to "the stagnant pool that breeds the noxious vapors." The youth problem, which in another era would be called "juvenile delinquency," had increased at an alarming rate. Even among the college undergraduates there seemed to be a tendency toward "intemperance and vicious dissipation." McVickar's dissertation on the question was so much to the point that it was subsequently printed as a twenty-one-page book.[2]

Had John McVickar been president of Columbia, doubtless his energy and imagination would have been directed towards the expansion of his college, but although he was often required to act on behalf of President Duer, much as he had done for President Harris, he was careful to restrict himself generally to the improvement of teaching methods. In 1835 Columbia had 99 students, 34 of whom were "Freshmen," and among those who joined the undergraduate body in October was a boy of fifteen, George Templeton Strong.[3]

It was the professor's custom to encourage his students in the daily practice of original composition; with Strong this developed into the discipline of keeping a diary he continued for forty years. When it was published in 1952, it was declared by Allan Nevins, the historian, to be "the greatest of American diaries and one of the world's great diaries." [4] In it, sidelights were thrown on Prof Mac's relation with his students. Three days after his matriculation, the author attended college and noted Anthon, Renwick, and McVickar among the professors. In the years to follow Prof Mac appeared frequently in Strong's diary. Strong was not always sympathetic to his former teacher; indeed, there were times when he reported with evident malice examples of McVickar's discomfiture. But he also accorded the professor what is surely the highest praise any student can give to an instructor: "Old McVickar's lecture room 1835–38 did more to influence me and mold my way of thinking than any other feature of my college life." [5]

McVickar's cousin, Nat Moore, that year resigned his chair of Latin and Greek because, it was said, the "question of discipline plagued him." The matter of college discipline seemed to devolve upon Prof Mac, who, the undergraduate chronicler noted, "gave us a speech of an hour & 5 minutes by my watch—it was very well written, for I do not believe it was extempore." Shortly after, Strong noted, "asked Mc, the extempore Prex' to let the upper class have the use of the chapel for a class meeting (to draw up a petition to have a little sport)." Through some misunderstanding, although McVickar had evidently granted the undergraduate's request, when the students arrived they found the doors locked. In the argument which followed, the janitor, Mr. Dugan, endeavored in vain to keep the peace and the rebels were dispersed only by the appearance of Prof Mac himself, who was coming in a great hurry "looking like a turkey cock in a gale of wind." The boys sensed the professor "was evidently resolved to inflict a speech upon us, but on reaching the scene of action he found that all had vanished." [6]

Before McVickar's year abroad, there had already been considerable agitation in certain influential New York circles for the establishment of a New York University. The members of the Club had been prominent in this movement from the beginning. Their contention that a new institution was needed was based on their claim that Columbia College had become a "close corporation" and was unable to adapt itself to meet the changing requirements of the time. However, considerable obstacles stood in the way of their venture. Not the least among these was the opposition of Bishop Hobart, who held that Columbia had adequate accommodation and ability to expand when necessary. John McVickar, too, had his reservations about the need for and the chances of success of a new institution. He felt that instead more energy should be directed to improving Columbia College. His doubts were confirmed by the poor reports he had had in London of the progress of the University of London, whose proponents shared many of the ideas of the advocates of a new university of New York.

It seemed significant to McVickar that not until death had removed the dominating personality of Bishop Hobart did the movement for the new institution begin to gather momentum. He learned, on his return from Europe, that it had been discussed at the Club while he was abroad some time in August 1830, and James Mathews had suggested inviting educational leaders to advise on plans for the proposed university. But it was not until after Hobart's death that he and Mayhew Wainwright, with John Delafield acting as secretary, issued invitations to fifty-two heads of colleges and others for a conference in New York. In the meantime, on October 15, 1830, "the first council of New York university" was organized, electing Albert Gallatin as chairman. The educators who arrived in New York during the next few days held an interesting symposium which McVickar was sorry to have missed. His three good friends and fellow Club members, Gallatin, Wainwright and Mathews, had been appointed to prepare "an address to the convention," and it was they who in the course of the meeting chose the name of *The University of the City of New York,* for the proposed institution.[7]

James Mathews, who became the University's first chancellor, spoke of the Club in these days in a modest way, considering its energy and influence, as "a small company of us in New York who were in the habit of meeting weekly at each others houses for a social evening." Mathews was taller than the average in the group and his erect posture and trim physical condition added to his conversational power. His retentive mind made him a storehouse of information, but he was not tedious and sprinkled his discourse with the timely anecdotes of a preacher. McVickar and the other members found him good company.

The chancellor of New York University brought before the Club the problems of the University's temporary quarters in Clinton Hall, where Charles Pettit McIlvaine, a former West Point professor, was lecturing on the evidences of Christianity. There was much talk of the proposed faculty, which was to include the botanist John Torrey and Samuel Morse, now returning from France with definite ideas about an "electric telegraph" such as McVickar had seen demonstrated in Paris. Finally, the University Council over which Gallatin had presided purchased for forty thousand dollars the land fronting on Wooster Street (later to become Washington Square) and started erecting a limestone building of Gothic design. The fact that the cornerstone was laid during the summer of 1833 had little effect on Columbia. The prospects of the new institution seemed even less promising than those of the University of London, about which McVickar had heard such depressing reports on his visit to that city. But like the University of London, New York University was to become one of the largest and most respected institutions of higher learning. That, however, is another story.

The completion of New York University's building in Washington Square was the subject of animated discussion in the Club. Chancellor Mathews reported that the "State Treasury granted us a yearly appropriation of $6,000, besides a share in the Literature Fund amounting to at least $1,000 for 5 years." McVickar had urged the Gothic design and was well pleased with the result.

In the autumn of 1835 the University was officially moved into its new building, which was at first used both for residence and lectures. There the Club soon held one of its weekly gatherings in Sam Morse's quarters. They were spacious rooms overlooking the square and were to serve him as studio, living apartment, and workshop. His professorship was hereafter to be known as that of *Literature of the Arts of Design.*[8] In another year he was complaining that his chimney "did not draw" and that on occasion his tower room was "a perfect shower bath." At one of the Club meetings there he exhibited a crude apparatus which enabled him to mark down telegraphic, intelligible signs and to make distinguishable sounds for telegraphing.

The University itself, in spite of Chancellor Mathew's optimism, had still to prove its practical value. McVickar heard in 1836 from his friends in London, however, that their similar academic experiment had finally gathered momentum. Two charters had been granted, one incorporating University College and the other empowering the University of London to grant degrees.

In New York, the Athenaeum, which the Club had successfully sponsored, was still an effective medium for reaching the public. John McVickar's lecture there extolling free trade had been followed by a meeting at the Merchant's Exchange, which appointed him a delegate to the Free Trade Convention at Philadelphia. And now, with Washington Irving home at last and Fenimore Cooper promising to return, there was hope of the Athenaeum's becoming a literary center.

Samuel Morse, on his return from Europe, had written Cooper that although he had not been "much in society as yet" he had seen his sisters-in-law, and that "our friends the Jays I have met several times, and have had much conversation with them about you and your delightful family. Mr. P. A. Jay is a member of the Club so I see him every Friday evening. Chancellor Kent also is a member, and both warm friends of yours." [9]

Chancellor Kent, reviewing the *Prudence Crandall Decision,* in which a teacher had just been imprisoned for admitting Negro girls to her school in Connecticut, quoted Peter Augustus Jay's younger brother, William, who had made a notable contribution to the first number of *The Emancipator,* published that May in New York. All the members of the Club favored an extension of the privileges which had freed the Negroes in New York State and hailed the passage of the British Emancipation Bill in August of 1833. It seemed to McVickar tragic, as he remembered his visits with William Wilberforce, that this culmination of his friend's life work had not been accomplished until a month after his death.

As a group and as individuals, the members of the Club devoted their energies to various projects in education. Albert Gallatin and McVickar worked together in a society for the improvement of national education, and prepared a pamphlet on the subject. According to Gallatin's information, in 1833 the number of children of both sexes in New York who had that year received instruction in the common schools alone amounted to 531,240. In the face of these facts, he informed McVickar, he felt "we should not make our situation worse than it is. And it may also be observed," he continued, "that as the immediate object of the new society is not to increase the number of schools & of children attending schools, but to provide better books etc. for the use of those who have received the elementary rudiments of education, remarks on the number of those who have not received any, should not occupy a prominent place." [10] Gallatin was not opposed to increasing the number of schools, but he felt that given the situation the society should not be too ambitious but should confine itself first to raising the standards in existing schools.

The activities of the society prompted Dr. George W. Bethune, pastor of a Dutch Reformed Church in Brooklyn, to write McVickar on the expediency of an institution for the diffusion of knowledge, saying that he had been "long wishing anxiously that such an association might be formed." Bethune, who later issued Walton's *Compleat Angler,* recalled Prof Mac's "kindness to me when I was your careless and wayward pupil. Your instructions often recur to my mind," he assured his old Columbia professor. "To no one so much as yourself am I indebted for any taste for letters." [11]

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Whether it was inherent in McVickar's nature, or whether circumstances forced him into it, his was to be the role of the "power behind the throne." Nowhere was this more evident than in his relation to Columbia College. From the start, when President Harris had rested so heavily on the young professor's counsel, through all subsequent administrations, McVickar's personality had dominated faculty affairs. Certain of the trustees resented this, but time and time again they were forced to call on McVickar to "save" the college by acting as its temporary president. Yet they would not offer him the presidency of the college.

As President Duer's health began to give way under the strain of college administration, McVickar once more found himself compelled to carry the presidential responsibilities as well as his own professional work. By the spring of 1841 he had taken over the full duties of the president. This was finally recognized when on November 1, William Alexander Duer was given leave of absence until June of the following year, and Professor McVickar was appointed "to supply the place of the president temporarily with increase of salary of $600 per annum from 1st April last." There was a move to create for McVickar the office of vice-president, since he was so frequently called on to take over, but this was voted down. In May Duer resigned at the age of sixty and John McVickar was made "Acting President."

A few days later Templeton Strong wrote, "Prex has resigned, poor old soul—he hasn't been able to fulfill any of the duties of his office for a long time—Who'll be the successor? Mack? I thought he'd have it, of course, but I know one of the strongest trustees had come out dead against him. Next to him, perhaps Verplanck stands best—if he'll take the place. Wainwright wants it—but he won't get it. Seabury is talked of by some. He stands no chance, I fear."

The June meeting of the trustees was chiefly concerned with the election. Philip Hone noted in his diary that "several names were put up which after the first ballot were reduced to three; John McVickar, senior professor and Acting President, John M. Wainwright, Asst. Minister of Trinity Church and Daniel D. Barnard, member of the House of Representatives, of Albany." [12] On the eighth ballot, nine of the twenty-one voted for McVickar, six for Barnard and five for Wainwright. One abstained. "Dr. Wainwright, my nominee," Hone wrote, "I shall withdraw his name, in which case I presume Dr. McVickar will be elected." [13]

At the next meeting, Hone's diary noted, "Wainwright withdrawn, but still no election." At that juncture, however, Hone recorded that "friends of Barnard put up Nathaniel F. Moore. Moore's name was suggested by his cousin, Clement Moore, who was Clerk of the trustees." [14] Since resigning his professorship seven years before, Nathaniel Moore had not been active in college affairs, except for selling his library to Columbia and serving for a year as librarian. Nevertheless, Clement Moore, who had tried to discourage his cousin McVickar from joining the Columbia faculty in the first place, now had at home, according to Philip Hone, a sealed letter of acceptance, should Nathaniel Moore's supporters be successful. This proved to be the case for, as Hone put it, Nathaniel all at once got eleven votes to McVickar's nine—requiring only one to elect him. After two or three more ballots with the same result, Philip Hone told of having yielded his vote to Nathaniel Fish Moore, "and then he became President."

In the end Hone was persuaded that Moore would be "a more popular president and in his intercourse with the students will prove himself to possess the qualities requisite to govern the college in a higher degree than his reverend competitor." Although Templeton Strong had graduated four years earlier, his diary continued to reflect his ambivalent feelings toward his old teacher. With some malice he wrote, "So Moore is President of Columbia College. Poor McVickar will cut his throat with that everlasting *paper folder* of his." [15]

John McVickar, however, gave no evidence of resentment and concealed his disappointment at his unexpected defeat. The trustees recorded their indebtedness to him as "one who next month will have completed twenty five years of devoted academic labor and who has survived every member of the faculty with him when he began his course and a large majority of the Trustees who appointed him." But the burden of teaching so many courses was becoming too much. The College Papers showed that before the end of the month McVickar wrote seven pages demanding assistance in his department. It then included moral philosophy, rhetoric, logic, belles lettres, intellectual philosophy, and political economy, to which might be added "etc." [16]

In 1849, after nine years as President of Columbia College, Nathaniel Moore resigned.[17] John McVickar's name was again brought up for the presidency, but by now he had no desire to be tied down to an office in which he would neither be free to carry out his ideal for Columbia nor to continue the many civic activities in which he had proved his usefulness. "No," he wrote William, "I was solicited to be a candidate, but declined and would not have accepted an office full of annoyance, and one that would have cut me off from my little church." [18]

Much as McVickar had striven to extend the findings of scholarship and research in practical ways to meet the needs of the world outside the college walls, he decried the effort "to popularize education, to accommodate college studies to what are deemed the practical wants of a business community." As he put it, "Education governed from without—this is its root error. I care not from what quarter that dictation comes—from the will of rulers or from the voice of the multitude—it is usurpation whencesoever it comes." To John McVickar "education was a mission from God to man—the teacher and not the taught in the community giving and not taking impress-moulding, and not moulded by the mass on which it is sent to operate." [19] It was hard for most of the trustees of

Columbia to understand this principle which to Professor McVickar was fundamental in religious as well as secular education.

The Columbia trustees' minutes of October 29 regarding the choice of president noted "ballotting a number of times—no election." Then finally on November 5 John McVickar's long-time friend, who had just retired from his journalistic career, Charles King, was elected president. "Our college affairs are again settled," Prof Mac wrote William. "Dr. Moore resigned and Mr. King elected. During the interregnum," he went on to say, he had introduced a "short responsive service, and although Mr. King does not conform to it, I shall use it whenever called on, and thus not improbably lay the foundation for the chaplaincy." [20]

"I attended the inauguration of Charles King," Philip Hone's diary recorded. "Dr. McVickar, the senior professor, addressed the President in an eloquent and appropriate speech of nearly an hour." At the ceremony Hone noted, "Gen. Scott was present." [21]

The plan of expanding Columbia College with graduate schools into a university and of bringing the entire institution to bear on the needs of the public was the gist of the speech. This proposal, which had been a point of difference between McVickar and the trustees for the past twenty years, was now being seriously considered. From the time when Charles King had agreed to be one of the lecturers for the Athenaeum, he had supported McVickar's efforts in this matter, and it was to be expected when King became president of Columbia that he would institute a movement to develop a university upon the foundation of the old college.

The need for more money which had always blocked the chance of expansion was somewhat relieved by an increase in land values. The botanic garden which David Hosack and McVickar's father-in-law had struggled so hard to create and then to have Columbia accept now became a financial asset. So much so that a committee reporting on "the prospective easy management of its debt" advised the Columbia trustees as to the possibility, at least, of the removal of the college to that place.

In 1852 there was a general sprucing up of form and order in the college, the need for which McVickar had always stressed, and the *Trustees Minutes* recorded that "long usage requires Professors and students should appear at the examinations in their gowns."[22] John McVickar had such confidence in the new outlook for Columbia that at this time he endowed undergraduate awards for the most accurate knowledge of Patristic Greek and for the best English essays. Accordingly, the Columbia trustees moved a vote of thanks "for the foundation of two annual prizes in the Senior Class by the Rev. Dr. McVickar."[23]

Nevertheless, before another year had passed McVickar observed, "The College again communicates with the Govr for an end of the College, if carried out you may find us elsewhere, at any rate at Inwood."[24] This was followed with the report that a committee of trustees had recommended the immediate removal of the college from Park Place to the Elgin Garden site at Fiftieth Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. In the meantime, a new site was suggested which would eliminate the delay of building construction, and by November 1856 Columbia had purchased the Deaf and Dumb Asylum buildings between Madison and Fourth Avenues on Forty Ninth Street and ordered alterations for immediate use.[25] It was not long after this, when Morgan Dix "went round to Columbia college & took tea with the McVickars," that he found posters "stuck up all over the old walls announcing an auction sale of the lots on Thursday January 29."[26] He then learned that part of the land had already been sold, so that a speedy removal became imperative.

Added to this, the committee on college courses was hastening to complete a whole new scheme of university instruction. This gave McVickar the opportunity to press again for relief from his multiple teaching duties. Especially he hoped to have the subject of political economy recognized by a separate chair, such as had been afforded Francis Lieber in Columbia, South Carolina. The diary of Templeton Strong (now a trustee of Columbia College) recorded a spirited meeting in March when they proposed "the division of McVickar's chair made threefold instead of twofold which gives an opening that Lieber will exactly fit." The next month he observed, "Fish had the courage to do what many of the Board have talked about doing—bring forward resolutions looking to the removal of Hackley and McVickar for incompetency."

He described this meeting on April 20 "in the chapel, half dismantled, its doors off the hinges, utterly cold and dreary; our last meeting in the poor old college building. One of the landmarks of the New York of old times is falling and perishing."

The truth was Columbia had lacked adequate financial support all the forty years McVickar had been professor, and now that it was able to pay stipends and offer reasonable facilities to its professors McVickar's sacrificial service was no longer essential. Strong observed that because of this situation on April 25 a discussion on McVickar's case resulted in an "informal understanding" that certain of his friends would call on him with a view to some communication from him; a resignation, or a proposal that his present duties be changed. As a result, McVickar sent a letter to the trustees with a "semi-resignation" asking to be relieved of the more onerous duties of instruction. This was received on April 27 with a resolution of the trustees expressing their respect and esteem for him.[27] They then set about subdividing McVickar's professorial chair into four, namely, a chair of moral and intellectual philosophy, a chair of ancient and modern literature, a chair of history and political science, and a chair of the evidences of natural and revealed religion. Assuring him that he had been able and faithful, the trustees asked him to continue on the faculty teaching the subject they knew was closest to his heart.

The number of professors and other instructors in the last days of Columbia's old lecture halls was still only six. They gathered with the 143 matriculated students in the chapel for a final ceremony of farewell. The *Evening Post* of May 7 recorded that at the close of the chapel exercises President King briefly addressed the students, exhorting them "wherever they went, to carry the good and leave the bad behind—to go to the new locality with a clean record, and preserve it clean." They were advised that their courses would be "resumed Tuesday next [May 12] at the buildings in 49th street near Fourth Avenue until permanently located in the new edifice proposed to be erected in the Fifth Avenue near 50th street." The simple ceremonies were concluded with a farewell song, written for the occasion and sung to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*.[28]

Moved as McVickar was by this, what interested him more was the disinterring of the original cornerstone, which was done in the course of the day. This solid block of red sandstone, which Dr. John Bard had taken his son Sam to see laid six foot underground in August 1756, revealed an inscription whose letters were as fresh and sharp as the day they were cut. McVickar was instrumental in having it placed in the east wall of the new chapel until such time as the proposed buildings should be erected.[29]

* * *

For many years McVickar had urged the expansion of Columbia College to include graduate faculties. The problem was to develop a plan which would on the one hand maintain the status of the undergraduate college and prevent its eclipse by the graduate schools, and on the other hand to establish a close connection between the college and the graduate schools. During his overseas travels, McVickar had investigated the graduate schools of foreign universities, and when at last Columbia was ready to undertake the establishment of similar schools, McVickar was able to contribute his knowledge to the plans.

As Columbia began setting in order its new house on Forty Ninth Street, an improved system of college courses was also put into effect. It provided for departments, which were termed "Schools," of letters, of science, and of jurisprudence, stating that on entering the senior year each student may select either of these schools.[30] Among the twenty-six entering the senior class that year were such promising students as Elbridge Thomas Gerry, the future philanthropist, and Daniel Sylvester Tuttle, who became the first presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

Meanwhile, McVickar's dream of a graduate department of law began to take definite form, and it was arranged that a building in Lafayette Place be loaned by Columbia and furnished as a "Law School." [31] Encouraged by this, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, under its eighth president, Edward Delafield, sought an alliance with Columbia. Because of Delafield's connection with Samuel Bard's family, it seemed fitting to McVickar that he should be the prime mover in the amalgamation.[32]

In spite of the political disturbances of 1863, Columbia's income was then for the first time, as far as McVickar could remember, sufficient to balance the maintenance costs. Also, a further expansion following Columbia's consolidation with the College of Physicians and Surgeons was presented in a proposition offered by Thomas Egleston in March that a school of mining, engineering, and metallurgy be added. It was a subject Egleston had studied in Paris, and McVickar on his visit there made particular note of the Ecole Royale des Mines. Its "scientific arrangement" and "the laboratories for the young engineers" appealed to him. Often he talked over the plan with his friend Egleston, who was at that time engaged to marry his niece, Augusta McVickar.[33]

Before the year was out, the Columbia trustees assigned rooms in the college building for use by the School of Mines and appropriated five hundred dollars for necessary exhibits of specimens. Egleston was appointed the first professor, and was joined by another former student of the Ecole des Mines of Paris, General Francis Laurens Vinton, and others. It was also decided by the trustees that a course on history of modern literature be introduced. One rather disturbing incident in the not very cloistered circle of Columbia was the sudden departure of the professor of physics, Richard Sears McCulloh, to join the Confederate forces. He was promptly expelled by the college authorities for having abandoned his post of duty and allied himself with "those now in rebellion." [34]

In March 1864 Charles King, after fifteen years of service as president, tendered his resignation. He was almost the same age as John McVickar and their families had always been intimately associated in New York, but more than that, the two friends were impelled by common ideals. Templeton Strong criticized the retiring president as having failed to perform "that great task that McVickar had outlined in an address on his inauguration,—which was to create a bond of sympathy between the college and the needs of the city." Nevertheless, McVickar did feel grateful to Charles King for his consistent effort to expand the college into a university.

Because this ideal had obviously begun to take hold, McVickar, now seventy-seven years old, was prompted to consider his own resignation. Charles Anthon, his neighbour on the old Columbia green, was giving up his office as rector of the Grammar School which McVickar had done so much to start. His friend Sam Morse was now returning to painting at his country home near Poughkeepsie, where he had recently been associated with the founding of a school for girls to be known as Vassar College. Another member of the still remembered Club, Chancellor Mathews, was publishing his *Recollections,* while General Winfield Scott was publishing his *Memoirs.* Many others who had been John McVickar's colleagues during the years had disappeared from the scene.

As one of their first actions after electing Barnard president, the Columbia trustees on June 6, 1864, ordered that the salaries of their faculty, which had been curtailed during the depression, should be restored, "except McVickar, the reduction of whose salary was intended to be permanent." [35] However McVickar may have felt about this, three days later Strong noted in his diary that "McVickar agrees to become an Emeritus Professor at his present rate of compensation which is necessary to him!—and Barnard will henceforth represent the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion to the Senior Class one hour weekly." [36]

No one could have expressed greater appreciation of the balance McVickar had preserved in the conflict between the advocates of religion and science, which the Darwinian theory had brought to its height at that time than the devoted scientist and priest of the Episcopal Church who was about to be inaugurated as the tenth president of Columbia College. Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard wrote McVickar a few days after his retirement asking for the privilege of looking over McVickar's lecture notes on natural theology. He had found McVickar's syllabus an advantage, but his fuller notes, as Barnard put it, "would more essentially assist me." He mentioned specifically that Professor McVickar's "manner of treating the principal points would suggest thoughts to me which could not but have value." [37]

McVickar complied, of course, and when he accepted the invitation of the trustees to be present at inauguration on October 3, he listened with the greater interest because President Barnard had chosen as the topic of his address *The Relation of Physical Science to Revealed Religion.*[38]

* * *

One of McVickar's most important contributions to education was his part in founding a college designed to fulfill his ideal. In this, secular and religious teaching and research were to be integrated. It further called for the complete education of the student combining his elementary and advanced years of instruction. In founding St. Stephen's College at Annandale-on-Hudson, McVickar was giving the full benefit of his experience in academic administration. The care he took in assigning credit to his young nephew, John Bard, for what the record shows was clearly the professor's own accomplishment follows the pattern apparent in other fields of his endeavor. The institution he founded was later taken over by Columbia University, called Bard College, and under that name eventually continued as an independent college.

The establishment of the college was approached with caution, and doubtless in McVickar's mind with the hope of involving his son in its development. In 1852, before McVickar moved the remnants of his family to their new home on the Hudson River, he wrote his son William, "We will look what can be done at Dearman. I shall purchase, or secure at once, ground for a school, to be used as, and after a time converted into, a church."[39] And accordingly that same year William, having concluded his engagement at St. Peter's, Morristown, was appointed missionary to Dearman and parts adjacent, which included his services as chaplain at West Point across the Hudson. To this was soon added the cure of the neighboring parish of Zion Church, Greenburg, at Dobbs Ferry.

It was on John McVickar's sixty-fifth birthday that the first spadeful of earth was upturned for a proposed chapel-school of St. Barnabas. A week later when William Creighton, rector of the adjacent parish of Tarrytown, came to lay the cornerstone, McVickar told the assembled neighbors that to his mind it was "the manifest duty of the residents of this village at the present, when land is comparatively cheap, to secure the blessings of religion and christian education not merely for themselves but for those who should come after them, by an endowment in land like those in England which have yielded such blessed fruits." [40]

The construction of the school aroused widespread interest in the community, which was later to be renamed Irvington. Washington Irving subscribed to the building, as did other such friends of Professor McVickar's as Alexander Hamilton, Robert Browne, Robert Bowne Minturn, Franklin Cyrus Field, and Prof Mac's nephews, John Jay and John Bard. McVickar had also secured certain financial aid from Trinity Church. The enthusiasm of these younger men was an encouragement to the professor although the major cost of the handsome stone structure fell upon him personally. Finally on June 11, 1853, the "chapel-school" was dedicated.[41]

The opening of the school itself at Irvington came on Thursday, July 17, 1856. In his address McVickar stressed "the union of religion with education in the church, as the only safeguard against fanaticism on the one hand and infidelity on the other, and unrestrained licentiousness which was the result of both." He also explained the plan of the proposed school. He concluded with the hope that although the school could give free education to the poor, a fair tuition should be forthcoming from those whose circumstances would admit of it. It was further stated at this time that this chapel school was designed to merge into "the higher organization of a college," transferring to it its name, grounds, chapel school buildings, and village property, so as to be thenceforth known as "the College of St. Barnabas." [42]

In the Diocesean Convention of that year, John McVickar made the proposal for such a college part of his report as superintendent of the Society for Promoting Religion and Learning. The society had in 1851 been instrumental in establishing the school at Geneva as Hobart College, and was continuing its support of the Theological College in New York with which the General Theological Seminary merged. He felt that the students of the college he was now proposing should be recipients, according to their needs, of the bounty of the Society.

In regard to the General Theological Seminary itself, John McVickar, as a trustee and member of its standing committee, had certain suggestions for altering the status of that institution. He recalled that its establishment was the result of compromise, and that for many years after it continued to be the only theological seminary in the Episcopal Church. Now it was but one among many seminaries whose number was growing year by year, already reducing the students of the original seminary by half. "Twenty years ago, its students numbered 80;" he stated, "the present year less than 40, with classes successively diminishing."

This being the case, McVickar then went on to suggest, "that the General Theological Seminary should cease within a definite period, altogether, as it has already in great part done, to be a school for diocesean education, and be devoted thenceforth, with its ample library and enlarging income to furthering the higher learning of the Church." [43] Thus the General Seminary would become a sort of graduate school of theological education, and admission to residence would be confined to alumni of the various diocesean schools.

No one could question Professor McVickar's concern for the General Theological Seminary in New York. In 1849 he had written his son William saying, "The meeting of the board of T.— at the Semy was an highly important one. We have referred to the Comm preparation for a permanent head & in the meantime have made the chapel the students' religious home by full services on Sundays & Holidays." [44] To him it was the teaching center of true Catholicism in America. This had been challenged by the overwhelming number of emigrants from Ireland now constituting over a fifth of the city's population. They brought with them a fighting loyalty for the Roman Catholic Church. They challenged the apostolic succession of the Episcopal Church and the claim of the Anglican Communion to be part of the Holy Catholic Church. The retort from Anglo-Catholic members of the Episcopal Church was sharp. Fenimore Cooper entered the controversy with such vehemence that some counted him a bigot. To combat this threat of Roman Catholicism McVickar advocated the encouragement of higher learning within the Episcopal Church.

John McVickar had equal regard for the Christian position of the apostolic churches in the Middle East as for the Latin church in the West. It seemed to him unjust, therefore, that the Pope of Rome should claim authority above the Episcopal churches in England and America any more than might be claimed by the Pope of the Coptic Church in Africa. To present a fairer historical understanding of the Catholic position, McVickar sent the General Seminary his personal check for one thousand dollars to endow two prizes. One was to require an examination, "oral or written by the pen, after the manner of English University Examinations for Honors, in one or more of the Greek Fathers." The other in ecclesiastical history was to have special reference to the early history and canonical independence of the Church of England, "as being *sui juris,* in all ecclesiastical matters, a distinct and independent branch of the church of Christ." [45]

As a further evidence of the professor's interest in the future of the General Seminary, in 1857 it could be noted that he presented it with a valued family portrait of his mother's first cousin, Benjamin Moore. In expressing appreciation as secretary of the faculty, Samuel Roosevelt Johnson added that they were "particularly gratified by receiving *this* of Bishop Benjamin Moore, inasmuch as the Seminary had been erected upon the Bishop's land, and the son of the Bishop had contributed so munificently towards the endowment." [46]

In his 1858 report as superintendent of the Education Society, McVickar noted a change of plans in regard to the school he had started in Irvington. It was now to meet the need "for the preparatory studies of the Theological seminary, or for the complete education of the missionary." He then explained that because his nephew, John Bard, was taking up the matter in earnest, he decided to transfer from Irvington both his influence and efforts. Henceforth he would devote himself to establishing his proposed college on the Bard estate at Annandale. The Bishop in his address said that he had sanctioned the move.

Then on St. John's Day (while the Christmas evergreens still decorated the church which was to form the nucleus of the college at Annandale), the building was destroyed by fire. Furthermore, a financial crisis stripped John Bard of a large part of his fortune.

"My dear John, how can I tell you of the shock I felt," Prof Mac wrote Bard, on hearing "of your calamity." As the professor put it, "Nothing short of a death of a dear one has ever sunk heavier on my heart, & I can only pray God thro that gracious service in whose honour you were labouring, to support you under it. We all here feel most deeply," he concluded, "the sad catastrophy at the very moment of realizing all your hopes." [47]

With the burden of financing the organization falling heavily on his shoulders, McVickar continued with the plans for the college at Annandale. The Rev. George Franklin Seymour (who later became Dean of the General Theological Seminary), noting in McVickar's printed *Report on the Training School* that there would be no difficulty in gaining incorporation under the act for the founding of colleges, assured the professor, "The Diocese & Ch will owe very much to your Society & especially to yourself if success should crown our efforts." [48] Finally McVickar was able to report to the Diocesean Convention its incorporation, changing its name from St. Barnabas to St. Stephen's College.[49]

At the first meeting of the college trustees in Annandale, McVickar suggested the head of the institution be known as the Warden. To this office the Reverend George Franklin Seymour was then elected with a salary of two thousand dollars from McVickar's Society of Religion and Learning.[50] The chapel, designed by Frank Wills of the Ecclesiological Society and erected by John Bard, was consecrated by Bishop Potter. John Bard also gave half of the initial library of 4,700 volumes.

As president of the Standing Committee of the Diocese, McVickar's continued concern was to strengthen the support of the new college. Its board of trustees, over which he presided, on Seymour's resignation named Robert Brinkerhoff Fairbairn as Warden of St. Stephen's College. It was an office he held with distinction and "a firm hand" for the next thirty-five years. About McVickar, Fairbairn often observed during the course of those years that he had "never been brought into official relations with anyone for whom I had formed such attachment." He recalled especially one occasion when the professor preached at the Church of the Transfiguration in behalf of St. Stephen's College, saying, "After service he took my arm and made me walk home with him. His gentleness and kindness completely won my heart." [51]

As for the chapel school in Irvington, in 1859 it became St. Barnabas Church, and in April Prof Mac's son William resigned from Dobbs Ferry to become rector of this new parish. Years later the vestry wrote, "To Professor McVickar in acknowledgement of the obligations under which the parish of St. Barnabas stands to him as its Chief Founder." [52]

The General Theological Seminary in Chelsea, however, seemed on the point of sinking into oblivion. The endowment of the seminary had been used up and the six thousand dollars John McVickar had raised as a permanent fund to be forever held in trust for the benefit of the library had long since been dissipated in general expenditures. Even the one thousand dollars of the McVickar prizes which continued to appear as part of the Finance Committee Report had no longer any monetary backing. The two buildings on the block between Twentieth and Twenty First Streets running west from Ninth Avenue were in need of repair, and the river lots which had been filled in removed them from what had once been the pleasant bank of the Hudson. By way of encouragement McVickar presented from his Society for Promoting Religion and Learning a gift of one thousand dollars to express the "deep interest of the Society in the Seminary." He was still urging his fellow trustees of the Seminary "to carry out the higher course of Theological Learning" with the suggestion they create fellowships and build "The Fellow's Hall."

He wrote John Bard at Annandale in 1864 that "scarce a day passes without half a dozen letters (at least) to answer. Scarce an Evening free from duty & lying before me for the Winter the proffer I have made of my Services to aid in supplying the want of a Prof of Eccles History to the Senior Class in the General Theol. Sem." [53] It was in the spring of the following year that Samuel Seabury was granted a leave of absence, and Professor McVickar was "requested to take charge" of the Department of Biblical Learning and Ecclesiastical History.

PART IV

CHAPTER 1

Anglo-Catholics at Large

To comprehend the Anglo-Catholic movement in which Professor McVickar figured prominently, one must recall the steps which led to its formation. The first prayer book in English was printed in 1549. In 1552 an Act of Uniformity prescribed its use in a revised form, which raised the level of its doctrine. This brought about an opposition party, soon to be known as Puritans, and in 1569 stirred Pius V to encourage a political rebellion in the north of England. The following year a papal bull excommunicated Queen Elizabeth and the church over which the Act of Supremacy gave her authority.

The Puritan Rebellion and the Restoration period sharpened the prayer book controversy until in 1688 James II's declaration in the interest of Romanism cost him his crown. On the accession of William, a Dutch Presbyterian, certain of the bishops and clergy of the English Church refused to take an oath of allegiance and retired to Scotland. It was from this Episcopal Church of Scotland that Samuel Seabury received apostolic consecration in 1784 on the promise that he would carry back to America the liturgy as it had been originally translated from the Latin. Bishop Seabury, in conjunction with two other bishops who had received their orders from the Church of England, in 1790 published a Book of Common Prayer for the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.[1]

It was this prayer book with its emphasis on the sacraments and the apostolic succession that Bishop Hobart sought to promote with the aid of such young men as John McVickar. In September 1823 Hobart sailed for Liverpool and a month after his arrival he was in Scotland being warmly received by the Episcopal Church which had given America its first bishop. Strengthened in his zeal for the primitive faith by the nonjuring bishops in Scotland, Bishop Hobart spent the best part of the next two years in England, where the church was at a low spiritual ebb. Although the Church of England had continued the use of the prayer book as revised in 1662, it had failed to preserve the emphasis on 'the faith once delivered to the saints' as set forth in the doctrine and sacraments of the original prayer book. The notes Hobart made during these years, faded and almost illegible now, give little cue to his activities among English churchmen. What does remain clear is the effect on them of his burning desire to restore the Catholic practices of the ancient church together with the Evangelical Revival of the 1730's. The topic of his diocesean address on his return to America was "The Highchurchman Vindicated."

The biography John McVickar published in America after Hobart's death in 1830 is filled with paragraphs of polemical force defending the Catholic position. McVickar's exposition of the Anglican Communion as part of the Holy Catholic Church with apostolic succession and sacramental doctrine was republished in England in 1838 by the leaders of the Anglo-Catholic movement. In appreciation they presented McVickar with a costly collection of Catholic books for the library of the General Theological Seminary in New York.

The Protestant reaction in the Episcopal Church was to oust any who favored the more liturgical and primitive order known as Catholic. Bishop Doane of New Jersey might have been dislodged if it had not been for McVickar's polemics in defense of his churchmanship. Another of the Anglo-Catholic bishops, Henry Ustick Onderdonk, had been so assailed that he was forced to resign from the Episcopal See of Pennsylvania. And finally the opposition struck his brother, the bishop of New York, Benjamin Onderdonk. The fact that he was subjected to a "smear campaign" which caused a court of bishops to suspend him from all the functions of the sacred ministry on the grounds "of immorality and impurity" was evidence of the ungoverned excitement created by party differences.[2] "It was thought by many," according to William

McVickar, then in his junior year at Columbia, "that envy of the growing power of the diocese of New York," which now numbered one hundred and seventy-four churches and chapels, "together with a dislike of its decided churchmanship, had had somewhat to do, at least, in shaping the sentence." The *Churchman,* representing the Anglo-Catholic party, charged it was a Low Church conspiracy, and the trustees of the General Seminary, where McVickar's influence was strong, refused to remove the bishop from the faculty.

As for John McVickar, he resolutely refused "to sit in judgement" on his bishop, and an envelope containing the record of the trial which was sent to him, he sealed and marked, "Never opened. To be returned." Although McVickar saw the necessity of bowing to the authority of the court, personally he considered the sentence an illegal one.[3]

On the progress of the Anglo-Catholic movement in England, as on political and literary matters, McVickar was kept well informed through correspondence with his English friends, and in turn kept them abreast of developments in America. Some of the most interesting and detailed accounts came from Thomas Acland, fellow of All Souls, who as an undergraduate had guided McVickar through Oxford. Writing in 1832, he emphasized "the fearful conflict of principles and the enormous addition of power of the social machine, which we are now witnessing." He spoke of shuddering at the undercurrent of the world which seems to make "society its god," and assured Professor McVickar he would be glad to have his impression of their position "looking at us from above the stream." [4]

In another letter Acland confessed that "having had, like most young men, my run of liberalism, I no longer hail with unmixed joy the mighty movements of our age." He referred to "the severe trials which our (and your) as I should add, Apostolical Church (not established by law but instituted by Christ & the Apostles) may have to undergo. The rationalism of our school & the vague spiritualism of the other do frighten me." But he added, "It is not for a boy thus to express his fears but to learn to meet the evils of life."

The letters from Acland, and the expressions of concern from such a man as Thomas Arnold, who had declared that "the Church as it now stands no human power can save," taken with Jeremy Bentham's prediction that "the Church of England was ripe for dissolution," indicated to McVickar that the reviving influence of the Anglo-Catholic movement was sorely needed in England. Though himself far removed from the scene, he was to make his contribution to that movement through his biography of Bishop Hobart, who had carried the "banner of Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order" to England.

As early as 1832 Sarah Bard had pressed the question, "Have you time to begin with any thought of Bishop Hobart's memoir?" [5] The success of McVickar's *Life of Samuel Bard* during the previous decade and the closeness of his association with the late Bishop Hobart encouraged the professor to undertake the biography of his friend and mentor. Completed in 1834, *The Early Years of the Late Bishop Hobart* combined McVickar's forceful literary style with an important contribution to understanding Hobart's thought and actions. Original letters by the bishop included in the book seemed to refute the charges of personal ambition which had been leveled against him and expounded the Anglo-Catholic stand which he had taken in the course of his episcopal administration.[6]

The initial response to the work was only mildly encouraging. But there were letters of appreciation such as that from John Church Hamilton, who wrote the author that he counted him "among the few Americans who write English in its purity & imparting to your political essays & to your biographical sketches tho a different, an equal charm." [7] There were clerical scholars such as William Berrian, successor to Hobart as rector of Trinity Church, who wrote the author that he "took up *The Early Years of Hobart* on New Year's eve and, to show with what interest and pleasure I read it, it is only necessary to mention that I sat up till between 1 & 2 o'clock in the morning and did not lay it aside till it was finished." [8]

Some of the most enthusiastic letters about the life of Hobart came to McVickar from the Anglo-Catholic group in England.

After reading *The Early Years,* Henry Handley Norris wrote McVickar from London that he could not conceive "how it would have been possible to render your own branch of the Xtian church a more essential and lasting service." Ever since their meeting in London this influential British cleric had held John McVickar in high regard. "You do me I assure you," the letter to his old friend continued, "no more than justice in believing that my attachment to your church as a branch of the Church Catholic of growing importance continues as ever."

Norris was now a prebendary of St. Paul's London, but he had been serving for forty-one years on the committee of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. He spoke of the spread of the missionary movement. "The West Indies making strong appeals and a large subscription going to enable the Bishop of Barbadoes to make some religious provision for the negroes. Then further," he added, "the religious destitution of the vast dependency of New South Wales has been brought before us by Archdeacon Broughton." William Grant Broughton was shortly to be made metropolitan of Australasia. Norris concluded his letter to McVickar saying, "You will be glad to hear that Mr. Weckam to whom you showed much kindness is going on well in Ceylon." [9] McVickar's active interest in foreign missions continued to be a bond between the two men.

Norris had sent one hundred pounds toward a library fund already amounting to more than five thousand dollars, which John McVickar was promoting for the General Seminary. Also McVickar's London publisher, John Miller, informed him that "on the cover of the British magazine for March was a useful notice of the Theological Seminary and one which will probably occasion some Books to be sent to me" for the library in New York.

The *British Magazine of Ecclesiastical Information* had been appearing during the past three years under the editorship of Professor Hugh James Rose with the assistance of his brother, whom McVickar had met in Switzerland. The "notice" on its cover John Miller referred to encouraged him to ask for "20 or 30 copies" of McVickar's biography of John Henry Hobart to sell at commission.[10]

Word soon came from Walter Farquhar Hook, a priest who had been appointed by McVickar's friend, Lord Lyndhurst, to Holy Trinity, Coventry. There, when McVickar was in England, Hook was instituting Saints Day observances and innovating evening services (rare in those days) for which he used the novel illumination of gas. It was he who had preached the sermon in 1825 when the nonjuror bishops in Scotland, who had consecrated the first American bishop, were likewise consecrating a bishop for Europe. This was called "an attempt to demonstrate the catholicism of the Church of England and other branches of the Episcopal Church."

Hook now wrote John McVickar to express his interest "in all that concerns the true church of Christ in the United States" and further assured McVickar that he wished "to see it built up in the primitive truth of which Bishop Hobart was so able and eloquent a defender." As to "the memoirs of the early life of that truly Apostolical Prelate," the vicar, who had "had the great honor of knowing Bishop Hobart when he was in England," declared McVickar had "done good service to the cause of religion by the publication."

Further, he informed the American professor that he was "much interested about your library and am ready to be employed in that good cause." His proposal was "to raise a subscription among my friends for the purpose of presenting you with a complete set of the Fathers, including the Benedictine edition," which he thought could be purchased for about three hundred fifty pounds.

It seemed that on a visit to Oxford as one of the select preachers before the university, Dr. Hook had mentioned his plan to "my friends, Professor Pusey and Mr. Newman of Oriel." These two priests, still in their thirties, together with John Keble, an older scholar, had been fellows at Oriel College, Oxford. There Keble's sermon on national apostacy, preached three years after McVickar's visit to England, had started the Anglo-Catholic movement. John Henry Newman, who had before in a strongly Protestant mood been writing such poems as *Lead Kindly Light,* met with a few other priests at Hugh James Rose's rectory at

Hadleigh and with them resolved to fight for the doctrine of apostolic succession and the integrity of the prayer book.

This ideal, as McVickar had made clear in his biography of Hobart, was the battle cry which the American bishop had carried to England years before. One result was the issuing of what the Oxford group started calling the *Tracts of the Times.* Edward Pusey, for some years Regius Professor of Hebrew, had been alarmed by the spread of rationalism in the church. He was also now persuaded to join this Oxford movement. It was his influence which changed the *Tracts* from stirring appeals to solid statements on the doctrine of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

"They entered very warmly into the Business," Dr. Hook wrote McVickar in reference to the General Seminary library, "but they wish me first of all to enquire whether you have the *Fathers,"* for Professor Pusey, being a close student of the pre-Reformation prelates, was making his contribution to the movement in his *Library of the Fathers.*[11]

Unable to go to England himself, McVickar hoped that the relations between the English and American supporters of the Anglo-Catholic movement, which had been stimulated by his biography of the late bishop of New York, would be further promoted by the visit to England of certain other American bishops. One of the visiting prelates was Charles Petit McIlvaine of Ohio, the tall, stately, handsome leader of the opponents of the Tractarian movement in America. The other was an Anglo-Catholic, Levi Silliman Ives, bishop of North Carolina. Both of these John McVickar could introduce as his friends for he was as strongly evangelical as he was Catholic.

Subsequently McVickar's young friend, Thomas Acland, who had just taken his M.A. at Oxford, wrote from All Soul's College to say "how popular both have been among us" adding, "I think I may perhaps venture to say that among persons like Mr. Rose that tho Bp. McIlvaine be the more polished and outwardly attractive, and though he appears to be a person of sincere & earnest piety yet that the plain straight-forwardness and undisguised simplicity of the Bp. of North Carolina has made him the favorite perhaps because his opinions on church matters are more fully in union with those of our catholic church school in England." Acland defined "our Catholic Church as the center of the Christian system," saying that as a layman he believed "some of our finest spirits in England are acting upon feelings & principles like those of the noblest saints." To him "Keble and Newman in relation to our present times are a wonderful phenomenon, and the fact that we have revived the daily service of the Church and the observance of the feasts and festivals," he imagined would "perhaps tell a good deal. What one wishes to see is that all the warmth of the Evangelical school should be absorbed in the church system." [12]

Sir Robert Inglis thought McVickar would be "glad to hear of the cordial sympathy which exists between the members of our Establishment here and those Bishops of your portion of the Catholic Church." He gave as an example "the Bishop of London drawing out all his children, a long row, to receive the blessing of your Bishop McIlvaine," and mentioned the "not less favorable impression your Bishop Ives has been creating." [13] Up to this time the clergy of the Episcopal Church in America were not licensed to officiate in England, but from then on the pulpits of the Church of England were open to them.

Walter Farquhar Hook wrote McVickar that he had had "the pleasure of meeting the Bishop of North Carolina at my friend Mr. Rose's." Hugh James Rose was then perpetual curate at Southwark after having served as professor of divinity at Durham. Hook explained in his letter from Coventry, where he presided over a parish of nine thousand souls, that he had not time to take any immediate steps "as to the formation of your library." However, he said he had "conversed again with my friends, Professor Pusey, Mr. Newman of Oriel and Mr. Palmer, the authors of the *Origines Liturgicas,*" and assured McVickar "that ere long we shall be able to send a handsome present to the brethren in America."

Hook went on to express the confidence "that there are many with you who are determined to adhere, though they die for it, to the Catholic Doctrine & Catholic Practice, resolutely opposing Papacy on the one hand & ultra protestantism on the other. It was indeed," he explained to the Columbia professor "your manly avowal of these Principles in your first letter that excited in me so strong a wish to aid you in the good cause you have at heart." [14]

Before the close of the year Bishop Doane of New Jersey wrote McVickar, "From my heart I thank God that the noble enterprise of the endowment for the Library is accomplished,—chiefly so far as human agency is concerned by your persevering energy." [15] The library was housed in a long room above the refectory in the center of the General Seminary building, where not all of the ninety students could find residence. A special meeting of trustees was called in April to hear McVickar's report, as chairman of the Building Committee, regarding "estimates for the contemplated wing of the Seminary."

John McVickar's next concern was to raise an endowment for a chair of ecclesiastical history to insure an adequate presentation of the ancient foundations of the Anglican Church, and for this chair he favored the former librarian, William Whittingham, whom McVickar had sent abroad to recover his health. Bishop Doane agreed on the desirability of Whittingham for the post, noting that ecclesiastical history must be in safe hands.[16] Whittingham's appointment was an important step toward assuring Catholic teaching in the seminary.

One of Whittingham's first services was to make out a list of books for the seminary library in response to the generous suggestion of McVickar's Anglo-Catholic friends in England. It included "The Apostolical Fathers by LeClerc; All the Benedictine editions except Augustine, Jerome, Hilary; The last and best edition of the *Bibliotheca Maxima Patrum* with Pere LeNourry's Apparatus; All the collections of ancient & oriental Liturgies with the liturgical works of Renaudot; the Bollandists collection of the lives of the Saints; the Venetian or the preceding edition of the councils; Baronii Historia Ecclesiastica, the Antwerp edition with the Continuations & Critiques; and the works of Asseman on the Eastern Church." In these Whittingham told McVickar he felt "the tenor of Mr. Hook's letter seems to be sufficiently complied with, particularly as the articles named are all expensive." [17]

Also from England about this time McVickar received notice that through his friend, Colonel Fitz-clarence, now earl of Munster and president of the Asiatic Society, "a set, as far as can be completed, of the works published by the Oriental Translation Fund since its institution up to the present time," had been forwarded to him through his publisher, John Miller.[18]

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, meeting in Philadelphia in 1835, declared itself "charged with the whole work of missions," which was a novel procedure for Protestant churches in America, and it created a board of missions for that purpose. The new organization passed a resolution requesting John McVickar to take the editorship of its official publication, to be called the *Spirit of Missions.*[19] McVickar was too occupied to serve as editor, however, for he was deeply engrossed in collating a book he hoped would be of spiritual value to many. The volume of one hundred sixteen pages finally appeared under the title of *Devotions for the Family and the Closet, from the Manual of a country clergyman.* It was a deeply personal revelation of spiritual discipline and brought from the promoters of the Oxford Movement in England a response of sympathy and confidence. Hook commented on its "beautiful simplicity and manly piety. In this & in your life of Bp Hobart I was struck with your language," he said, "which is more Saxon than generally adopted by your countrymen." [20]

John McVickar's *Early Years of Bishop Hobart* was continued by his publication in the spring of 1836 of *The Professional Years of John Henry Hobart.*[21] Its warm reception at home was expressed in such a letter as the author received from Robert William Harris, the son of Columbia's former president, declaring it was "a matter of joy that the character of that great man has at length been so ably portrayed." Admitting he was not "one of the Bishop's warmest admirers during his life," he now could appreciate "the soundness of his views and the wisdom of his policy."

McVickar intended that the entire life of the New York bishop should be published as a trilogy, the last volume of which should be "the closing years" of Hobart. To him, biography was a medium for teaching, "that incident might give interest to doctrine, and doctrine give importance to incident, and the whole become to the rising generation of the clergy of our church a pleasing and instructive manual of the ministerial character."

In June 1837 John McVickar had received an important recognition of his *Professional Years* of the life of Bishop Hobart in a letter from Thomas Acland. He wrote that on returning to England from a trip a year before he had found the volume which McVickar had sent him. "I was indeed forcibly struck by it," he declared, "and I showed it to some friends at Oxford thinking it might be turned to useful account here. I also procured from Miller (the American Bookseller) the *Early Years;* and after some consideration I hit on the plan of myself reviewing the book which I have presumed to do, and one of the contents of my packet is the result. I will not tell you how highly I rated your work as a composition, but my sole object was to introduce to the English readers the man himself whom you had so ably exhibited in his own country."

Acland was starting his political career as Member for West Somerset. His letter went on to relate how "my friends at Oxford, Keble, Pusey & Newman and some others, have been endeavouring and with remarkable success to fan the flame of slumbering Churchmanship and Catholic Christianity." One result of Acland's interest was that the Oxford publisher D. A. Talboys surprised McVickar about this time with the suggestion of bringing out in a single volume an English edition of both *The Early Years* and *The Professional Years* of John Henry Hobart. "The whole of the profits," David Alfonso Talboys informed the author, would be paid "to the credit of the library of the American church seminary" as an evidence of his devotion to "the Holy and Apostolic Church" of which he was a member. McVickar agreed, and his admirer, Dr. Hook (who had just left Coventry to be vicar of the industrial town of Leeds) was persuaded to write the preface. This lengthy preface over the name of "Walter Farquhar Hook, D.D., Vicar of Leeds, Prebendary of Lincoln and Chaplain in ordinary to the Queen" was a scholarly work in itself. It purported to set before the British public for the first time a "History of the Church in America" and combined with McVickar's works to make a large, impressive volume.[22] It was well received by the promoters of the Oxford Movement, and in appreciation Thomas Acland was delegated to send McVickar two copies of a new work of John Henry Newman. Newman was at the height of his influence in Oxford, defending the Tractarian stand on the *Via Media,* and McVickar was advised that it was "by his desire" the copies were sent, "one for yourself and the other for Dr. Whittingham, the librarian." [23]

CHAPTER 2

The City Mission

INTERESTED as John McVickar was in the provocative and social theories which became current as society faced the problems brought about by the Industrial Revolution, he became restive with mere theories and turned to more practical means of coping with these problems. And though far from indifferent to doctrinal developments within the church, he was above all a man of action who took every opportunity to apply religious ideals to the secular needs of the larger community. His interest in civic betterment went hand in hand with his conception of the church's responsibility to society, and in this as in so many other matters he missed the dynamic leadership of Bishop Hobart. Fortunately, however, Bishop Hobart's successor, Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk, was also concerned with the expansion of church activities.

In 1831, at a meeting of the Male and Female Missionary Society in a basement room of Christ Church, Bishop Onderdonk had proposed the initiation of a city mission movement. A general call had been issued to solicit the cooperation of the Episcopal clergy of New York, and John McVickar was approached with the request that he too lend his energies to this movement.

McVickar hesitated at first because he was already engaged in a number of other church projects. He was helping to promote the Young Men's Association and had recently delivered a course of lectures on moral science before this group. He continued to serve as vice-president of the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society and of the Tract Society, acting as chairman of the latter's committee of selection. Added to these, he took an active part as trustee of the Society for Promoting Religion and Learning. "My external duties are voluntary," he had written shortly after his return from England. They were also numerous.[1]

In spite of these time consuming interests, the professor agreed to participate in the new movement for city missions. He saw in the proposed missions an opportunity for the practical application of his findings in political economy inspirited by the idealism of the church. These groups of social workers in depressed areas of the city would have as their object the relief of poverty and its consequent effects as well as the spread of the Christian gospel. It was half a century before Canon Barnett was to start his Toynbee Hall and the university missions in London, but Professor McVickar's plan of operating these city mission centers with the aid of students from Columbia and the General Theological Seminary in New York was of the same pattern. He saw in them a welcome opportunity to develop schools and lending libraries, and with all this in mind he entered heartily into the movement.

At the initial meeting on October 18, 1831, the bishop of the diocese presided. A fellow priest, Thomas Lyell, and two laymen, Jacob Lorillard and Edward W. Laight, served with John McVickar as vice-presidents and Eliza McVickar's cousin, James Murison Pendleton, M.D., was secretary.

Their intention was to establish at different points in the city "churches in which the seats shall be free and mission houses for the poor." McVickar saw to it that two committees were appointed at this first meeting, one to devise means for establishing and improving "the Common School, Sunday schools and Infant schools" in connection with the missionary stations. The second committee was for starting and building up "libraries" in these centers. Of the latter committee he accepted the chairmanship. With this organization they proceeded at their next meeting to provide for the purchase of a building in Vandewater Street which in due time was consecrated as the Church of the Holy Evangelists.[2]

At the City Mission Society's meeting in January 1832 McVickar gave an encouraging report on the library committee. Then, when it was obvious that their first mission was proving its value, McVickar's brother-in-law, Bard, and two others were commissioned to draw up a charter. In April 1833 the state legislature passed an act incorporating the institution which was backing the movement. William Bard, Gideon Lee (then mayor of New York), Ogden Hoffman (the city's district attorney) "and their associates and successors," thereby became "a body politic by the name of the *New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society*."[3]

In the meantime McVickar had been looking for another site suitable for a second mission station. He later recounted this experience. Having occasion one Sunday in the autumn of 1832 to pass through Stanton Street, he encountered "throngs of idle and destitute boys playing in the street or lounging in the sun." McVickar inquired of some of the boys why they were not at Sunday school and promptly received the answer that there was none. He knew that the nearest Episcopal church was a mile away and there seemed no other evidence of religious influence in the poverty-stricken neighborhood, said to be the most densely populated in the city.

When he mentioned the incident later to his mother and her friend Mrs. Isaac Lawrence, Ben McVickar's mother-in-law, their reply was, "Do you preach and we will help you!" Forthwith they gave him seventy-five dollars toward having "on that spot a Mission church."

This led to the securing of a small dark room over an engine house in the vicinity. Here he assembled on the feast of the Epiphany in January 1833 six adult worshipers with a few ragged children who were persuaded to enter. They had only two prayer books among them, but on the following Sunday, he recorded services were held in a hall on the corner of Allan and Houston Streets "opposite the First avenue." He saw to it at once that a Sunday school was organized and persuaded two students of Columbia College to develop the work.

His next step was to bring the matter before the City Mission, and they assumed the responsibility of sustaining the new mission. It was soon evident the original hall was too small, and the Society resolved to purchase lots in the vicinity and to contract for immediate building, not to exceed ten thousand dollars.

John McVickar then personally purchased for twenty-five thousand dollars sufficient land on the north side of Stanton Street for the new church. In the course of the next month the cornerstone was laid. Before long it had a thriving congregation of four hundred with a Sunday school of "300 scholars and 30 teachers." It was generally accorded as "an act of moral heroism on the part of McVickar to venture such a church in New York as a free church without rented pews. In June it was consecrated as The Church of the Epiphany, the second station of the City Mission Society "with the poor as their special parishioners." [4]

This did not interrupt the professor's official activity in connection with the New York Protestant Episcopal Public School. Among other things he secured from Trinity Church at a nominal rent a lease of ground in Canal, Varick, and Grand Streets on which to erect "a large brick school house." When it finally came to his resigning a post he had long enjoyed as the school's visiting vice-president, it was resolved that "the thanks of the board be presented to the Rev. Dr. McVickar for the faithful & efficient services which he has rendered to the institution." Further, with the rector of Grace Church, Mayhew Wainwright, John Delafield, and William Bard, later warden of the church, McVickar submitted a constitution of what was to be known as the Education Society of Grace Church.[5]

Ever since he had come to teach at Columbia, the professor had gone out of his way to promote education through Sunday schools. One that he had started during the summer of 1820 in the vicinity of Corlear's Hook had so prospered that it was soon to be recognized as the parish of Calvary.[6] Others, such as the one he was opening now on Broadway near Twenty First Street, might in time be merged or discontinued. They were part of John McVickar's answer to the religious confusion of that day.

In all these enterprises he had the enthusiastic support of the younger clergy and the theological students. The life of the young priest who had died while carrying on certain of Prof Mac's teaching responsibilities during his absence in Europe seemed to point an important lesson for the times, and McVickar published at his own expense *A Biographical Memoir of the Rev. Edmund D. Griffin.*[7] He gave the right to the profits from a first edition of this book to the General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union and received their thanks for this "valuable donation" to the society.[8] Lydia Sigourney wrote from Hartford in tribute to "the pen which gave the community so perfect a portraiture of the lamented Griffin." Herself a prolific author, though writing anonymously, she urged McVickar to continue his biographical writing as a means of raising the appreciation of spiritual values in America.[9]

In matters of public education McVickar had the close cooperation of his friend Albert Gallatin, who maintained that it would be impossible to preserve democratic institutions and the right of universal suffrage unless "the standard of education and the mind of the labouring classes" could be raised. In discussions with him at the Club, Prof Mac would contend that there should be no such thing as secular education apart from religious education. There was one truth and therefore one education. "It is an age of bold, intellectual inquiry," McVickar declared. "It is an age of wild opinions and fantastic delusion. It is an age of the fulfilment of prophesy. Science is step by step, as I might say, christenizing itself, and turning into an argument for our faith those very physical phenomena which it once laid as stumbling blocks in our path." [10] Therefore, it seemed to McVickar an obligation of the churches to enlighten especially the poor of the city through primary schools.

To Professor McVickar these various activities were connected, stemming from his belief that education and religion were inseparable. Further he felt that the church should spare no effort in expanding its educational institutions, because the spread of religion could be achieved only through education. Therefore, he attached great importance to the education of those who would be able to undertake this work. Almost from the start of the General Seminary he had been active in its support as a trustee and member of its standing committee. After his return from Europe he wrote, "I have undertaken to preach—for the greatest cause our church can urge, the Theological Seminary." Mayhew Wainwright, about to become rector of Trinity Church in Boston, conveyed to McVickar the thanks of the trustees for his able and appropriate appeal in aid of the funds of the seminary. They published his dissertation as a book under the title *The Signs of the Times,* and used it to good effect.

John McVickar served on the Seminary's library committee with George Washington Doane, then editing an American edition of Keble's *Christian Year.* In addition to this and his position on the Seminary's standing committee McVickar was made chairman of the building committee. He had been foremost in urging an additional building and soon was able to write William Whittingham, the Seminary's librarian, telling him of the "new West building." [11] The professor's interest in this theological school induced him to begin buying up land near the General Seminary grounds with a view to further expansion. By the close of the year he was holding twenty-three adjacent city lots on Ninth and Tenth Avenues. He had also continued to press for a closer tie with Columbia, having the sixty-five students of the Theological Seminary invited to attend the Columbia commencement and join in the procession.

At the same time McVickar continued his work for the advancement of missions throughout the state. In his 1831 report to the diocese as secretary of the Committee for Propagating the Gospel, McVickar had spoken of their forty-nine mission stations, including a new station in Saugerties, Ulster County, and declared that a "state of religious excitement prevails in many neighbourhoods through our Diocese." This missionary movement, he declared in 1835, is "doing for the church what a wider elective franchise is now effecting for the state in some of the older governments of Europe, that is; spreading its roots among the people—identifying itself with their interests and best feelings, and thus widening and strengthening the basis on which itself rests."

John McVickar saw this as opening an opportunity for the teaching function of the Christian Church, following the precept of the Master Teacher who had founded it. "Hitherto," McVickar pointed out, "we have said to the poor of our city, *Come and be instructed;* now at length have we taken the true course and said to our missionaries, *Go Ye and Teach them.*

From *come* to *go* is a great step. Under the former principle the poor from us learned nothing, for they either would not or could not come. Under the present one there will be no other limit to their spiritual improvement than the number and character of those whom we are enabled to send forth to the task."

To an eager following of younger laymen and women John McVickar imparted not only his Christian zeal for civic improvement but also his technical knowledge of the latest teaching methods culled from many contacts at home and abroad. Further, he gave personal attention to the adequate financing of the project. Early in 1835, at a meeting of the managers of the City Mission Society, he offered a resolution for raising funds from the parishes which met with such results that by summer he was able to propose the purchase of lots in King Street offered by John Jacob Astor, together with a chapel building and parsonage house. In short, McVickar wrote to the editor of a contemporary journal, "It is a cheering prospect before us and with heart and hand would I advance it." With it he enclosed a "recent publication of the Paris City Mission," which had been a direct outgrowth in France of the movement in New York.[12]

When congratulated on "the extraordinary increase of our church in this city," however, John McVickar questioned whether that increase went beyond its natural ratio, that is, he explained, "beyond the actual growth of the city itself." It led to his publishing the facts as drawn from public documents, and from this statistical table he demonstrated that within the last twenty-two years "our population has increased 2½ fold, our wealth 6 fold and the number of our churches 2⅔ fold." In this he saw no cause for congratulation. "We have been in the condition of rowers with a favorable current; our barque has been bourne along, rather than propelled by our labors." [13]

In 1845 the suspension of Benjamin Onderdonk as bishop of New York presented a serious problem. Not only had Bishop Onderdonk been one of the chief sponsors of the City Mission movement but the episcopal office was the corner stone around which McVickar had been building its organization. He decided to take a step which would at least keep the existing missions functioning until the episcopal authority could be reinstated. He changed the meeting place from the committee room in Vandewater Street to the "Foreign mission room at 281 Broadway," where he had already established his headquarters as superintendent of the Society for Religion and Learning. There it was resolved that every missionary congregation worshiping in a building belonging to the City Mission Society should be permitted to organize itself, "choosing their missionary as Rector." With the understanding that all sittings were free, it was agreed the parishes were to receive from the society eight hundred dollars for the first year. The Church of the Holy Evangelists was the first to avail itself of this, followed by St. Matthew's and the Church of the Epiphany.[14]

CHAPTER 3

Missions Near and Far

Christianizing the West . . . The Seaman's Mission and Catholic Complications

McVickar was convinced that it was the responsibility of the churches to establish schools and colleges wherever they could. He expressed repeatedly his admiration for the Roman Catholics' efforts in this direction, and admonished his own church for resigning the responsibility of teaching to secular authorities. He believed in the separation of church and state but not of church and school.

The predominance of Roman Catholics among the increasing number of immigrants introduced New York to a new problem of segregated education. John Hughes, Roman Catholic coadjutor for New York, realized this when he was consecrated as titular bishop of Basileopolis. His interest in religious education was from the start aggressive and soon led to the founding of St. John's College, later to be known as Fordham University. For the present he openly opposed the Public School Society as a Protestant corporation dominating the local school system and distributing city funds, and instituted a political campaign to secure a share of the school funds for his few parochial schools meeting in the basements of Roman Catholic churches.

In this matter John McVickar was not an idle spectator, and in 1838 he was expressing his views vigorously through the press. "Though church and state are not connected in our utilitarian republic," he wrote, "church and school, I trust, still are." He then took up a report recently made to the legislature of Ohio by a professor on the subject of public school instruction. In 1836 this professor, Calvin Ellis Stowe, had married Harriet Beecher, a daughter of the president of the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati where he was teaching Biblical literature. Then he had gone abroad to investigate foreign school systems, and his subsequent *Report on Elementary Instruction in Europe* had been printed. It was now being distributed to all educational centers in America.

"The perusal of it," McVickar reflected, "has left upon my mind three impressions. The first that our government has been distanced by the monarchies of the old world, so that education—sound, practical, scientific education—is at this moment more widely spread among the rising generation, and more rapidly advancing in those worn out tyrannies, 'foes to all popular knowledge', as we have been blindly stigmatizing them, that it is even in the most favorable parts of our own democratic land." Then also he felt the report showed that popular education had been found efficient in proportion as it had been based upon the Bible. And finally McVickar deduced from the report "that in our national neglect of music among the branches of common education, we are neglecting one of the most powerful instruments of moral government." [1]

One of John McVickar's ambitions was to introduce into his church schools, as he had at Grace Church, the study of psalmody. To this end he enlisted the help of Lucy Thornton, one of the distinguished family at Battersea Rise, who had corresponded with the monks in the Swiss Alps on this subject. McVickar was doing considerable research in primitive church music and now from England Miss Thornton sent him "copies of those chants which you did not meet with in print." Then because several of them were not published, she hoped she had written them for McVickar "with sufficient clearness to be understood." [2]

Meanwhile, in eloquent sermons McVickar advocated various educational ventures to be sponsored by the church. "I heard a capital sermon yesterday morning in Trinity Church," Philip Hone noted in 1839, "from Professor McVickar of Columbia College." He observed that the professor did "not often treat us, but when he does it is a treat indeed. He comes with a sermon well prepared, logical, learned; of the purest Engish, and a style surpassingly beautiful." However, he complained of McVickar's soft Irish intonation because "it causes a little pain to listen so closely as is necessary for one who like myself have not the sharpest ears in the world, in order that no part should be lost of that which is so well worth hearing."

The former mayor of New York counted John McVickar "a highly instructed man and one of the best English writers in this country; indeed I do not know one whose style I would sooner take as a model for correct and elegant composition." Nevertheless, Hone seemed to reflect, "In conversation as well as in pulpit his manner is didactic and his utterance slow and formal, and this may be counted for from a natural impediment which by dint of increasing exertions he nearly overcame in his youthful days, but by means of which he acquired that precision and careful manner of speaking which is not entirely agreeable to his auditors." Hone went on to say that in spite of this difficulty "the superior eloquence of his writings and the words of Truth and Soberness of his conversation are not materially obstructed." [3]

The diary of Prof Mac's former undergraduate critic, Templeton Strong, who at the last commencement had been granted an A.B. degree, took a different attitude on hearing his old professor preach three weeks later. "McVickar's sermon was good," he allowed. "He bestowes doubtless a great deal of labor on whatever he writes, too much perhaps. There are too many petty flourishes and too many antitheses, many of them merely verbal jingles." [4]

Much of McVickar's most effective preaching was on behalf of education through missions. After the independence of Texas had been recognized by the United States, he had urged the Episcopal Church to accept it as a "foreign mission." Leonidas Polk had then been given an honorary degree by Columbia and sent as bishop to administer to that district as well as Louisiana. John McVickar wrote Sir Robert Inglis in 1840 of the success of the venture over the past two years and now received his reply in connection with what the English M.P. called, "your admirable offshoot of Episcopacy in Texas." Inglis said that it reminded him of the "new feeling which has grown up among us in respect to the Episcopate in our colonies. We now feel that we ought to begin with Bishops & send them out as chief missionaries, with their clergy under them to be in turn sent forth from the central see." This he felt would not disturb the civil and political relations of the Establishment in England "where the first minister of the Church is the first subject of the Realm after the royal family." He reminded McVickar that he had sent him a pamphlet containing a report of "what I said in the House of Commons on the question of Church extension last June." [5]

The matter of church extension had also become a serious question in the United States because in the previous ten years the population of the country had expanded from twelve to seventeen million. On a summer's evening at St. Thomas's Church there was a meeting in relation to the mission work of Jackson Kemper, who, since receiving his Columbia degree, had been serving for five years as bishop of Missouri and Indiana. "After Bishop Kemper had finished," a contemporary journal reported, "Dr. McVickar commenced a speech grounded on the statements which had just been made." It seemed the bishop had referred to the rapid success of the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the number and extent of their schools and devotion to them.

McVickar questioned "whether the devotion of the clergy to Christian education and such identification of the Church and religion with it, was to be reckoned among the errors of the Roman church. If it were," he went on, "then were we Protestants right on our separation from the cause of education. If not, then was it to be admitted as one of the true principles of the primitive Christian church, and one from which Protestants generally, and our Church above all others, must be admitted to have fallen." He held "that schools, colleges and universities were the offspring of Christianity and of Christianity alone." Further, he declared "that Christian education was to the Church a solemn and imperative part of its Christian duty," and finally that "the Church of Rome, in its devotion to it, was but holding on to primitive principles and to Catholic practice."

He traced the origin of the separation of church and school to the neglect of the colonies by England. "Through fear or feebleness," McVickar declared, "she gave not to us as it was her duty to do, the blessing she herself enjoyed of seminaries of education consecrated by the Church. Throughout the whole of the thirteen colonies—colonies, be it remembered, of a crown bound by oath to the defence of the Episcopal Church—but one Church college openly arose during the whole period of its rule, viz, that of William and Mary in Virginia, in fulfilment of this sacred duty, and one other, he would add, which was at least implicitly so." Although the professor, because of his official connection with Columbia, hesitated to name the other college which was "implicitly" a church institution, the editor inserted in brackets its colonial name, "(King's College, N.Y.)."

"Missions, it is true, the Church of England founded among us," John McVickar's tirade against the motherland went on, "but not colleges. She gave us Presbyters but not Bishops—a half-formed and impotent church without the principle of vitality essential to its existence and without those muniments of defence against heresy and error, that the Church Catholic in her wisdom had never before been unguarded by in any age or Christian nation. Hence it was that our political independence brought forth a phenomenon hitherto unseen among Christian men,—a polity unsanctified by the name of Christ,—the necessary result of which was a system of education where the Bible could come in but by chance, and colleges whence the Gospel was expressly excluded, or into which it must creep only in disguise. Under such a system the control of education became a scramble of intrigue, or an unholy battle of political strife, whence the Church soon withdrew in disgust."

All who heard or read these words later in print knew McVickar was speaking from firsthand experience with secularized education. "Sufficient for the Christian, it was wrong in principle," he declared, and went on to advise as an economist, "Our subsequent boasted and acknowledged prosperity sprung not from *its* influence." Further, he warned that "were our physical advantages which have kept and now keep the *natural* man at comparative peace, once taken from us, we should soon learn how little we were indebted for that peace to our boasted wisdom in the divorce of Religion and Education."

McVickar then referred to the French experiment as "the second historic step taken in this course of alienation" of religion and education. "France had framed her university expressly on the model of that of the State of New York" and this he went on to define as "the principle of Education without the Gospel." He felt it contributed to the chaos which followed. "Godless science being its fairest product; its foulest—and that which even now poisons all her prosperity," and here the professor of belles lettres in him was speaking, "a blasphemous and licentious literature."

"How many colleges, it may be asked, has our Church or Churchmen been able or dared to add during its sixty years of proud, successful independence, a period during which our population has quintupled and our wealth grown tenfold. Three only! Only three small unendowed, trembling institutions [Washington College, Connecticut; Geneva, N.Y.; Kenyon, Ohio]. Out of the ninety five incorporated colleges reported as in existence within the United States, what proportion have we Churchmen in our hands?" he asked. "Five! Less than the least—not one-third of the Romish Church; less than the Baptist; one-tenth part of the Presbyterians; inferior even to those whom we repute to be despisers of learning—the poor Methodists—Christians whose contributions are in copper, whose gifts into the Lord's treasury are thrown in by mechanic hands."

John McVickar attributed the failure of Episcopal churchmen to their fear of "the charge of sectarianism from the people," and declared, "Let them fear, rather, the charge from God of neglecting their Christian duty. But whence the fear? Is it from those who act boldly and openly on that very principle which the Episcopal Church thus dreads the imputation of? This is absurd," was his retort. "All others have their colleges. Why not, then, Churchmen? The charge of sectarianism hurts not them. Why should it hurt us? All others do their duty in this matter, let us then do ours." McVickar brought this general exhortation to a dramatic close by asking for immediate action in "the endowment of a Professorship for Christian instruction in Kemper College" in St.

Louis, Missouri, and generally for "Christianizing the West" through the traditional medium of education.[6] It was such continued backing that enabled Jackson Kemper in the course of his activities in the "farther west" to establish in time seven dioceses, to found three colleges, and to open numerous schools and academies.

Another opportunity for expression was afforded the professor when the Archbishop of Canterbury requested special ceremonies in England and America to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Since this society had not only played a significant part in establishing the Episcopal Church in New York but also had interested itself in founding King's College in that city, it seemed fitting that so active a proponent of missions as Columbia's professor of moral philosophy should be selected to preach the sermon in Trinity Church.

John McVickar's discourse was remembered as being bold and outspoken—"eloquent in parts, but rather distinguished for the straight forward manner in which it dealt with the questions of the day,—Romanism and Protestantism, the Greek Church, Indian missions, bestowing the episcopate upon converted tribes, provincial synods and the like." Following the sermon, which later appeared in book form, an offering of three thousand dollars was made for domestic missions and an additional five thousand dollars was set aside as an endowment for an African missionary bishop at Cape Palmas. As a result of this last, in 1851 John Payne was consecrated the first bishop of Africa.[7]

* * *

The fact that the family fortune had been built on foreign trade in vessels owned by the merchant McVickar may have accounted in part for the son's concern for the welfare of merchant seamen. His idea of a seaman's mission embraced provisions both for their physical and spiritual well-being and for the stimulation of their minds through books and instruction.

In October 1841 the City Mission Society resolved that "Dr. McVickar be authorized to confer with the authorities of the navy-yard on behalf of this Board as to the practicability of obtaining from them accommodations having in view the establishment of a Mariners Chapel." McVickar had never given up hope of developing for naval cadets in New York an academy in connection with Columbia similar to West Point, and this might be an opening. Accordingly, within the next month he had conferred with the commanding officer of the Navy Yard and was soon in communication with the Navy Department at Washington. His efforts led not only to the founding of a missionary society for seamen in Houston Street, but also the organization of a subsidiary group known as the Young Men's Auxiliary Educational and Missionary Society. Also about this time the City Mission received a bequest of fifteen thousand dollars for the purchase of a site for a new mission station in Christopher Street, and McVickar was appointed chairman of its Organization Committee. In February of the following year he submitted his report on this property between Fourth and Bleecker Streets, recommending it be accepted as "The Mission Church of St. Matthew." [8]

John McVickar had a faculty for enlisting the enthusiasm of younger men in carrying out adventurous projects, and in regard to his proposition for a "Mariners chapel," he could report in October as chairman of a joint committee that "the Young Men's Church Missionary Society will maintain it, if the City Mission Society will establish a mission among the sailors of this Port." A few days later, at a meeting of a joint committee of these two societies for considering the establishment of a seaman's mission, John McVickar was "called to the chair." It was then "Resolved: that it is expedient a Seamans Mission be established in the Port of New York, that the Seaman's Chapel be placed in the bounds of Roosevelt and Pike streets, that a floating Chapel is to be preferred as the form of such a church." [9]

Before the month was out Thomas Mallaby received word "that they are going ahead with their new Sailor Mission. Dr. McVickar has subscribed very liberally towards this cause." [10] To secure the future of the Seaman's Mission, McVickar enlisted the interest of Robert Bowne Minturn, the controlling partner of Grinell, Minturn and Company, who shared with the Welds of Boston the reputation of being the greatest American shipowners of the day, and was one of the professor's constant backers in attempts at social reform and civic improvement.

With the increasing importance of New York City as a commercial center in 1844, more ships crowded the harbor, bringing with them the social problem of the sailor ashore. For this reason John McVickar's suggestion of a floating chapel for seamen received added support from the Young Men's Society while the City Mission Society was taken up with providing a missionary for seamen in Houston Street. After due consultation with Professor McVickar, it was resolved by the joint committee of the two societies that it was desirable the Young Men's Church Mission Society have charge of the mission to seamen and that it should be incorporated for that purpose. So it was that at the foot of Pike Street on a barge in the East River the "Floating Church of Our Saviour" was constructed after McVickar's Gothic design. This marked the beginning of the great Seaman's Institute familiar to almost every sailor who enters the port of New York. It is interesting and perhaps not unrelated that an organization similar to McVickar's Young Men's Association in New York was started before the year was out in England whence most of the seamen came. The English society was begun by George Williams and eleven young men and became the Young Men's Christian Association, which later spread through America.

Even before the Tractarian movement had become a force for Anglo-Catholic propaganda issuing from Oxford, McVickar as vice-president of a tract society in New York had used this means of propagating the "faith once delivered to the saints." [11] In the spring of 1843 a letter arrived from the English Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, thanking the professor "for the present made to it by the *Protestant Episcopal Tract Society of New York* of eight volumes of tracts published under the superintendance of that institution." The secretary assured McVickar that they were valued, not only on their own account, but as "a token of that kindly feeling between the two churches" which the society, for its part, was happy to maintain.[12]

On the other hand John McVickar received later in the year a letter of protest from Archbishop Whately in Dublin, who had made generous donations to the General Seminary library. Richard Whately and John McVickar had for years corresponded regarding their common interest in political economy, but now he informed McVickar that a pamphlet had been sent him "containing a statement by Drs. Anthon and Smith of facts relating to a very extraordinary transaction" with which he felt McVickar was doubtless well acquainted. It referred to Arthur Carey, a brilliant theological student who had come out boldly in defense of John Henry Newman's recent resignation from his parish. Carey's ordination had been the source of much contention. As one of the examining committee in the New York diocese, McVickar objected at times to the unreasonableness of the cross-questioning, but he had stood apart from the violent expressions of difference.

The "transaction," Whately explained, involved certain "principles represented as avowed by Mr. Carey. Whether right or wrong, the adoption of them implies *ipso facto,* the suppression of the church and the self deposition of all its functionaries till restored in union with the See of Rome and as subject to that Church." In short, the archbishop of Dublin made it clear that in his judgment "if a member of any church separate from that of Rome should come to the conviction that the separation was unjustifiable and that in the points at issue that church was right or not materially wrong, this man has cut away the foundation on which his own church and its enactments and appointments must stand, and is by his own shewing in a state of sinful schism till he shall have submitted to and joined the Romish church." Whately went on to remind McVickar that the Roman Catholic Church "has never recognized any Prot. church (as the British Govt did the U.S. Republic) but has always continued to regard us as rebellious children and revolted subjects and our orders as null and void."

Archbishop Whately wrote that the matter was of great importance because in Ireland he had "always held free inter-communion with the Prot. Episc. Church of the U.S. and have allowed many of its ministers to officiate here," but he explained to his friend, "whether I can remain on the same footing may depend on the issue of the case in question." [13]

McVickar considered that the most effective method of combating the threat of confused theology within the Episcopal Church was to intensify and expand the education of the clergy. As superintendent of the Society for the Promotion of Religion and Learning, John McVickar therefore proposed a new plan for ministerial education. He was empowered by the Society to explain through the pulpit and the press the advantages of educating ministers through school and college by the adoption of a system of "Scholarships" in place of "Benefices" for the aid of candidates. The plan, whose principles McVickar felt were "no experiment in the Church Catholic," was to include first, "Seminary scholarships entitling the nominee to the full course in the General Theological Seminary with an annual stipend of $200; second, Collegiate scholarships entitling the nominee to the full collegiate course in a designated college with the annual stipend of $100; and third, Classical scholarships entitling the nominee to a classical course not exceeding four years in such school as the Society may designate with the annual stipend of $40." McVickar saw this as a "turning point in the church's educational history." [14]

Convinced that "nothing is far distant in the policy of the Church that is progressive and certain," McVickar envisioned the plan progressing until "no parish in the diocese will be without its organized parochial school." This is a wide question, he declared in the columns of the press, "operating beyond the church upon society at large," and went on to ask, "How better than by such scholarships can we approximate to the solution of that fundamental problem which puzzles even the philosophic statesman, *How to Christianize the land through the medium of education, without encroaching on the bounds of individual freedom?*" [15]

CHAPTER 4

Church Building

The Ecclesiologists . . . Bishop Potter and the Cathedral System

McVickar not only engaged himself in matters of theological doctrine and of education, but also concerned himself with the physical aspects of the church. He considered the form of the house of worship as an extension of his conception of religion and its place in man's life. The American church was essentially a growing church set in the midst of primeval forest land and therefore the treelike columns and flowing lines of Gothic architecture seemed most fitting. In London he had felt the Classic lines of St. Paul's Cathedral "cold" as compared with the warm, living atmosphere of Westminster Abbey. Moreover, Gothic architecture allowed for the chancel and sanctuary in which the teaching liturgy of the church could be most effectively displayed.

From his early youth McVickar had been interested in church architecture. As a hobby, he had taken to experimenting with plans for church buildings, and his papers include sufficient samples of his work to attest to his skill as a draftsman. In 1805, while on his first visit to England, he had been deeply impressed with the beauty of Gothic architecture—of which there were few examples in America at the time. On his return to New York he had pursued his research and drawn up plans for a Gothic church which he was able to build at Hyde Park in 1811.

His second visit to England, in 1830, strengthened his earlier impressions. From London he wrote, "The more I see the more I am confirmed in my preference of the Gothic architecture for religious uses & am pleased that I have labored to introduce it."

While touring Great Britain and the Continent, McVickar had many opportunities to pursue this interest and he brought back notes and sketches which later served to illustrate his lectures at Columbia. Among McVickar's students at this time was a son of his fellow faculty and Club member, James Renwick Jr. The father was the engineer who contrived the famous locks for the Morris Canal and his son, after taking his degree at Columbia in 1836, followed his father's profession. He was soon engaged as an engineer in the construction of the Croton aqueduct and in this connection he designed a fountain to display at the Battery the city's newly installed water supply.

Young Renwick's fountain became the butt of many jokes. Edgar Allan Poe, who at the time was boarding at a farmhouse near McVickar's Bloomingdale estate, declared the fountain had "much the air of a small county jail in a hard thunder storm." Yet shortly after this, in June 1843, Renwick was selected to build the marble structure of Grace Church on Broadway at Tenth Street.

It was in February 1837 that the vestry of Grace Church had begun to consider building in a new location. Professor McVickar had allied himself with Grace Church from the day when his father had aided materially in starting the first church on the corner of Rector Street and Broadway. On occasions, during the absence of a rector, the professor had taken charge of the parish. He was now keenly interested in the proposed church building. He hoped, in his plans for developing Union Square, that it might serve as the new location for the church and it was doubtless a disappointment when the parish committee reported finally in 1843 they could not "recommend that Grace Church should advance so far beyond the present population of the city." [1]

McVickar's brother-in-law, William Bard, was warden of the parish at this time and architectural sketches which the professor had drawn for the new structure have been recalled by intimate members of his family. Although none of the original plans for Grace Church are known to be extant, it is unlikely that the professor contemplated submitting his designs for this great undertaking. But it is not at all unlikely that he discussed this project with his former student and offered to Renwick advice based on his many years' study of Gothic architecture. Though Renwick was only twenty-five at this time, his first church is still considered the most beautiful example of this style in America. He was to design many other important buildings, not the least of which is St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, and it must have given John McVickar great satisfaction to see his own love of Gothic architecture embodied in the fine work of his student.

Another young architect, Richard Upjohn, was introduced to New York about this time by McVickar's friend and fellow Club member, Mayhew Wainwright, with the idea of designing a new Trinity Church in Gothic style. A note in Upjohn's handwriting on his copy of Volume I of the *Ecclesiologist* reads, "March 1839—made sketch to improve Trinity Church, New York," (a little more than a month before he was selected as its architect). This church at the head of Wall Street had been completed, however, a year before the founding of the Ecclesiological Society.

This Society and its publication were largely the result of Professor McVickar's architectural enthusiasm. He had become aware of the need for instructing the public in the significance of employing the Gothic in ecclesiastical uses. Partly with this in mind, on April 2, 1847, he gathered with certain of his friends in the schoolroom of St. Paul's Chapel. There they organized themselves for the promotion of a "science of church building and decoration"—the group to be known as the New York Ecclesiological Society, and McVickar accepted his usual office of vice-president. One of his first concerns was to move that they "take action on establishing a library." In all John McVickar's planning a library was essential. Their next business was to set about publishing fifteen hundred copies of the first number of the *New York Ecclesiologist,* and for the support of this architectural magazine they began soliciting subscriptions to be sent to "the Treasurer of the Society, William A. McVickar, No. 8 College Green, New York." [2]

Encouraged by his associates and by what had been accomplished in Gothic church building in New York, the professor conceived the idea of erecting in Washington, D.C., a national cathedral as a monument to peace and federal unity. To this end, during the spring vacation of 1848 McVickar journeyed to Washington with his son William, then a student at the General Theological Seminary. There he remained to press his plea for a national cathedral, while William McVickar went on to North Carolina to visit the Collinses of Somerset Place, Cool Spring. The professor wanted for his economics studies a firsthand report on Josiah Collins' plantation, noted for its main crop of corn, mechanically shelled and loaded. At the same time, John McVickar had written Collins that he was convinced a national cathedral established in Washington would "appear to be the main pillar of this country's safety" from what he believed a danger of federal disunity. Collins' reply commended "the creation of a cathedral which you suggested at Washington. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and your information that such a thing was not even hopeless we certainly could not but hail as an omen for good." [3]

In the meantime McVickar had a letter from Lady Elizabeth Dodsworth in London acknowledging "the present of a book" and sending in return "a volume which Mr. Dodsworth has just completed." [4] Corresponding with the Dodsworths and others in England regarding church architecture proved of mutual benefit.[5] In his *Ecclesiologist* McVickar noted a meeting in St. Pancras, London, of the Cambridge-Camden Society, of which William Dodsworth was vice-president. This society shared the objectives of the Ecclesiologists in America and McVickar observed with satisfaction that the English group was changing its name to the Ecclesiological Society and also using a similar title for their publication.

The energy John McVickar had dedicated to the City Mission Society before the suspension of the bishop of New York was in 1849 directed through his recently conceived Ecclesiological Society. Its foundation principle was "reverence and love for the house of God," and its motto, *Tabernacula tua quam dilecta.* Up to this time most church interiors bore the heavy stamp of the Reformation. Prof Mac's son described the arrangement of a Trinity Chapel in New York as typical of Episcopal churches in America before this society began to operate. About six feet behind the chancel rail arose a pile of ornate furniture, filling the greater part of the chancel, "built up with kneeling benches, then the holy table, then behind, a huge reading-desk with Bible in the centre and folio Prayer-book on each side, above this and still behind, the towering pulpit, and higher still the sounding board with its symbolic decoration." [6]

In the professor's words, the changes he set out to accomplish were "the adoption of the old parish church of England with its lengthened nave and ample chancel. Aisles if needed; open roof; sacristry and south porch; no gallery; and with orientation whenever it may be secured." Added to this he advocated the adoption of "open seats instead of pews and, so far as may be, *free.*" His long study of architecture prompted him to urge "beauty in proportion rather than in material." He deplored the popular sham and pretense in building and advised "to decorate construction only and never to construct decoration." [7]

McVickar's organization was opposed, however, by those who saw in it the Catholic tendency of the Oxford Movement with which he had been associated from its earliest inception. It was difficult therefore for the group to find even a meeting place. "Last eveng we had a meeting of the Eccles. Socy," Prof Mac wrote his son William, "(where do you think) in our front parlor to which we adjourned from before the doors of the place of meeting after waiting half an hour in the rain. Mr. Preston read his paper & Harry is to prepare the next, on the adoption of One Style." [8]

The opposition felt justified when, shortly after reading his paper, Thomas Scott Preston entered the Roman Catholic Church, where in time he became chancellor of their New York diocese. Nevertheless the professor was resolved on continuing the publication of their magazine and declared, "The Ecclest will go on."

He had reason to complain of the personal responsibility thrown upon him by his colleagues in this architectural movement. "No. 8 College must they think attend to all its concerns," he protested, "applications for books, as well as plans for cheap churches," many of which McVickar designed himself. But, he concluded, "Honors must be paid for & the President must not complain." [9] As leader of this Gothic revival McVickar felt called upon to avoid the danger of indulging in the beauty of the media with which the church sought to teach, and the possibility of having their Catholic practices formalized into the code of a Christian cult. He warned the society against any such misconception of "dogmatic conformity in minor points as essential to Faith and Churchmanship. This spirit," he declared, "is non-catholic & if persisted in will swamp the Socy."

Typical of John McVickar's personal contributions to the periodical published by this organization was what he called "a short paper, *Why so few churches satisfy,* & a notice of Ruskin's (the Oxford scholar) *Seven Lamps of Architecture.*" Ever since the first anonymous publication of *Modern Painters by a Graduate of Oxford* seven years ago, McVickar had been prompted to keep in touch with the author. Now that John Ruskin had revealed his identity as the author and published his *Seven Lamps of Architecture,* McVickar hailed him as an outstanding champion of the Gothic revival. Templeton Strong's diary noted on March 10, 1856, "Went to Trinity Church this afternoon to Society for Promoting Religion etc. Discoursed with the Rev. Dr. McVickar, who is strong on Ruskin. He talks to his classes about Ruskin and does not hesitate to tell them that in 'the combination of aesthetic and spiritual perception', and so on, 'Ruskin is the greatest man since Plato.' " [10]

"If you can hear or see anything of him (Modern Painters)," Prof Mac wrote his son vacationing in Europe, "do it and make my respects to him." William McVickar was still treasurer of the Ecclesiological Society, and his father suggested that he visit the cathedrals of England in order to "prepare something for the future nos. in the form of letters to some officer of the Socy." [11]

"Of the Eccles Socy" John McVickar finally wrote his son that he was working on a general scheme to have it develop into a new organization, diocesean in name though not in action, under the title of the "New York Church Building Society." He planned the bishop should be ex-officio patron and visitor, with two standing committees doing all the business, apart in their action but meeting every three months. One of these McVickar conceived as a building committee "carrying on all the work we are engaged in except publishing (tho that may be), the other the finance committee for obtaining funds & appropriating them." [12]

Robert Inglis had been elected antequarian for the Royal Academy in 1850, and McVickar wrote William that he had sent Sir Robert a copy of "our last No. with the art. on Cathedrals & also a copy of my address on Mr. King's inauguration (as president of Columbia college) which has given the trustees some annoyance at my Churchmanship—my only reply has been 'if they don't like such sentiments they must not ask me to speak.'" And he added, "their offended notice of it makes me easy at least in declining voluntary labor in the college." [13]

It was at this time that McVickar established a temporary residence at Croton on the Hudson to be near the church activities of his Ecclesiological Society. "This fine weather," he wrote exultantly, "has kept me rambling, selecting choice spots, building rural cottages, instead of castles, and laying the cornerstones of half a dozen little country churches." Before the summer was half over, McVickar had "perambulated all the shore farms between us and Sing Sing, and visited all the chief families" in the interest of his proposed churches.[14]

The activities of the Ecclesiological Society aroused interest in many quarters. William George Tozer, an English architect, wrote on behalf of the Wells Diocesan Architectural Society, expressing "their desire of having their own Body admitted into Terms of Union with the New York Ecclesiological Society." Since they appreciated "the efforts now making in the American Branch of the Catholic Church after a primitive and correct Ecclesiology," he suggested an exchange of their publications.[15]

* * *

McVickar's plans for a cathedral were not merely architectural, they were organizational. The cathedral which housed the bishop's throne should also have the bishop in residence, and with him a college of clergy who would administer missions and extend the work of the diocese in other ways. He shaped the City Mission to this end to be under the personal direction of the episcopal authority. When that authority was suspended, as in the case of Bishop Onderdonk, McVickar suspended the operation of the City Mission, but when a strong leadership seemed assured at the consecration of Bishop Potter, McVickar came forward to revive the City Mission as part of the cathedral structure.

Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, after serving as provisional bishop for two years, died in 1854 leaving the diocese of New York again with a suspended bishop nominally as its head. It was a few days before the annual convention, at which his friend John McVickar had been scheduled to preach the sermon. McVickar changed his prepared discourse to suit the emergency and urged the convention to immediate action.[16] "The bold yet conciliatory spirit with which many of the church's wants were touched upon, such as *shorter services,* mission organization, banded labor and union among christians," his son recorded, "led many to urge my father, in spite of his sixty-six years, to allow his name to be pressed as a candidate for the vacant office. But now, as on a former occasion, he declined" [17] (perhaps because of a sensitive regard for his friend Bishop Onderdonk).

Nevertheless, the professor's exhortation did bring about the immediate election of a coadjutor bishop in the person of Horatio Potter, the younger brother of the bishop of Pennsylvania, who had been a keen student of political economy. McVickar had known both Potter brothers in Dutchess County, where they had grown up as boys not far from Hyde Park, but Horatio especially because he had come to New York to study at the General Theological Seminary.

"With our new bishop, my hopes for the church rise," McVickar wrote shortly after the consecration. "Last evening I spent with him, together with leading members of the Standing Committee to talk over plans. I started with the proposal of a great city mission with an endowment and found it was his favorite scheme. It was," as McVickar described it, "the scheme of a primitive episcopate with its church and home and its fifteen or twenty deacons, organized, and working, and living with the bishop, and carrying on the true missionary work. It is our ecclesiological picture, and if carried out, will be in some measure our work." [18]

The purpose of the professor's Ecclesiological Society was not only to advance the science of church building and decoration, but also the study of the church's institutions, operations, and functions. He wrote to his son regarding their Society, which had from the beginning been associated with the High Church movement, that "after many conferences with the Bishop & talks with leading men of the lower side, I am inclined to merge in such a scheme rather than ourselves to appear the originators of it & in this opinion Bishop Potter as well as the Committee coincide."

The bishop proposed to take from the pages of the Society's magazine, McVickar reported, "all we have urged & taught on the subject of the cathedral system as our trial working system." With the idea of pressing the matter McVickar set about gathering the judgment and plans of other bishops by direct correspondence. Among his replies came one from Benjamin Bosworth Smith, then bishop of Kentucky, expressing his approval "of the important discussion lately had about Cathedrals," and offering his "observation and experience of nearly a quarter of a century to you, and through you to your society." [19]

These findings, John McVickar wrote his son, he had "laid before Bishop Potter & requested him to give me his—this he has consented to do, tho a little fearful of committing himself." McVickar had also secured a cathedral plan from Henry John Whitehouse, now bishop of Illinois. Whitehouse was one of Prof Mac's early students at Columbia. The professor proposed to use not only this bishop's plan but, he declared, "As many others as I can I will get so as to make our mark on the church in this one last (probably) publication." He was convinced that "the time is rapidly approaching when the Ch. must come forth in this form equally in our new dioceses & our large cities. All that we want in N.Y. is the action of Trinity Church to set it agoing by the requisite endowment. But we must begin if it be but with the grain of mustard seed." [20]

The bishop of New Jersey wrote McVickar in reference to his cathedral plan for New York, saying it was "just as it should be. I go with it heart and hand; whatever I can do to promote it shall be done. In Trinity Church you have the means, and I trust the will to carry it out. It will be the nucleus of great things hereafter. It will eventually, I trust, revive and realize the cathedral plan and work. To me it seems the great thought of the age." [21]

CHAPTER 5

The Church and War

Senior Chaplain, United States Army . . .
Bishop Hughes and the Catholic Problem . . .
The California Regiment

Since he had first come to teach at Columbia, John McVickar had continued to devote his spare time to church work as well as to more general extracurricular activities. After his personal crisis in 1837, he became anxious to dedicate even more of his energy to "things spiritual," and his decision during the next few years to confine his activities at Columbia College to teaching and to refuse responsibilities connected with administration gave him the opportunity to carry out this wish. Through his friend, General Winfield Scott, Commandant of Fort Columbus, the United States Army post on Governors Island, he was offered the chance to assume regular duties as chaplain to the post.

There were at this time few official provisions for the spiritual welfare of the armed forces. As early as 1825 General Scott had arranged for "the possibility of a chaplain performing at burials" and his friend John McVickar had "often officiated by administering the Sacraments, reading prayers and preaching on Governor's Island." [1] In 1843 the post had employed the services of John Wayland, an Episcopal priest from the diocese of Massachusetts. However, in the summer of the following year, Wayland's ministry on the Island was terminated, and as a result General Scott asked McVickar to assume as a regular duty the services he had rendered voluntarily from time to time. In July 1844 Professor McVickar was appointed by the War Department "Post Chaplain to the United States Army Post at Fort Columbus." [2]

The appointment came during the college vacation, and since it had been understood by Columbia that members of the faculty could employ their Sundays in any way they chose there seemed no reason why McVickar should not accept the chaplaincy. General Scott ordered an adequately manned open barge, the official means of communication with Manhattan Island, to be put at Chaplain McVickar's disposal and assigned him quarters at the post.

Until now the soldier in peacetime had been left to find spiritual guidance where he could. Certainly during the previous twenty years John McVickar had known of no specific authorization for a brigade or regimental chaplain. To be sure, in 1818 an act had stated that the professor of geography, history, and ethics at West Point should serve also as chaplain.[3] Another act of Congress in 1838 had allowed for as many as twenty chaplains to serve at army posts "destitute of instruction." But less than half this number had been appointed and most of them were not clergymen. The post was regarded by military authorities primarily as a means of providing general instruction for young recruits and the children of resident families who would otherwise have little opportunity for education. However, to John McVickar the position suggested greater scope.

The time had come, he felt, to dignify the office of chaplain and to give to it the religious meaning that was its right. For Columbus, "the great recruiting depot of the United States Army," offered ready ground for his ministrations. He found among the bewildered rookies away from home for the first time "many cases of pressing need and great spiritual destitution." However, the only accommodation for divine service on Governors Island was the permitted use on Sunday morning of the room regularly used for post headquarters.

The inconvenience of this arrangement, a bare room with little equipment for teaching and no spiritual association, was apparent to the new chaplain. His experience with starting mission stations in crude surroundings stood McVickar in good stead now, and when weather permitted he assembled the military congregation "in a little grove of trees" later known as "Colonel's Row." And in the quarters which had been assigned for his personal needs he conceived the idea of establishing class rooms and "lending and gift libraries" such as he had instituted in the mission stations in New York. Friends and publishers in the city gladly responded to his appeal for books, and in time it was said that "not a soldier left the post under orders without being taken to his quarters and made to select some work from the library as a memento of their intercourse."[4]

Sunday after Sunday, no matter how rough the water and cold the wind, the professor could be seen standing on the Battery waiting for the army barge. If it were cold, a long military cape would be drawn tightly about him, and the army cap with its awkwardly high crown, protected by an oilcloth cover against rain or snow, would have its visor pulled down over his shaggy eyebrows. It was then that the refined Roman nose, the aggressive chin, square and cleanshaven except for a short beard underneath, and the generous mouth with a long upper lip often curled in a smile as he greeted a passerby, would identify him as Chaplain Mac.

On warmer days the cape would be discarded and the cap held in clasped hands. If the oarsmen were delayed by a rough sea he would pace up and down, the wind blowing the tousled hair back from his high forehead and causing the long tails of his coat to flap uncontrolled. The coat was always buttoned snugly around his trim figure, however, and the linen of his high stock and ruffed shirt was sure to be immaculate, but for all his proper appearance likely as not his "merry whistle" was heard in some catch tune of the day. At such times McVickar had a way of standing with his feet braced apart as he watched the hundreds of harbor craft which any wind would set in motion and among which a steam boat might come with "incredible speed" puffing across the bay.

The appointment as civilian chaplain advanced in importance as the war with Mexico threatened. The very danger and physical discomfort of the new responsibility filled John McVickar with the spirit of adventure. Those who saw him in the open barge "sitting in the stern sheets, wrapped in his military cloak, as the oarsmen pushed their way through the drift ice in the Bay and against the strong tides of the Battery," were impressed with the sincerity of his dedication. The army in those days had none of the acclaim of a popular public service, and soldiers in the streets of New York were almost unwelcome reminders of the impending war. McVickar had come to know them, however, as young men who were willing to commit their lives for their country. Therefore, to hold this example of patriotism before an indifferent public he felt was the responsibility of every loyal citizen.

For this reason he wore his army cape and hat on every possible occasion and hung them in sight of his classes in Columbia College, reminding them that in former days of threatened invasion, when he was ten years old, Columbia professors and students in a body had worked on the fortification at Governors Island. Student reaction to his appeal was varied, and to one of their songs they added the chorus:

> O! Johnny McVickar's a warlike man;
> He's built on the preaching and fighting plan;
> He's chaplain of Governors Island.

With the thought of bettering the conditions of the enlisted men, not only spiritually but also materially, McVickar in 1846 began to develop the idea of "Regimental Savings Banks," first investigating what other nations might have along this line. The British Consul at New York, Anthony Barclay, assured him that he felt it was "a subject of great importance to the soldier, and better worthy of the attention of Governments than are the food and clothing of the class to be affected." He promised to inform the professor "as to any measures which the British Government may have taken for the establishment of such a system for the British Army as you have described." It was apparent to Barclay that the physical and moral force of the soldier would be multiplied if the plan were carried into effect in a manner to secure confidence. He wished McVickar, "success in your project," adding, "you will deserve the highest commendation from your country." [5]

* * *

One of the immediate difficulties McVickar faced in performing his duties on Governors Island arose from the fact that many of the recruits were Irish Catholics. The influx of large numbers of Roman Catholic immigrants in recent years had posed new problems for New York. In England, Catholic emancipation had followed the passage of the Reform Bill, but there remained considerable mutual suspicion between the Catholic and Protestant groups both there and in America. McVickar had great respect for the Roman Catholic emphasis on teaching and hoped that antagonism between Catholic and Protestant could be overcome by a spirit of conciliation.

However, his work at the army post soon brought him to an awareness of the obstacles to be dealt with. There was at this time no Roman Catholic chaplain in the army, but although Chaplain McVickar was careful to do nothing which would alienate Catholic recruits from their church, he discovered that they had been forbidden to attend his services. He remembered the courteous contact he had had with the Roman Catholic monks in Switzerland. Moreover, he had certain scholastic regard for the new Roman Catholic bishop who the year before his consecration had collected funds, largely in Europe, for the establishment of a college later to become Fordham University. With the hope of reaching some amicable understanding, McVickar called at the bishop's residence in New York.

Bishop Hughes was "not at home," but learning that it was the reverend chaplain's wish, as he put it, "to have my opinion as to whether or not I consider it lawful for the members of my church to attend the religious services different from their own, which may be authorized by official sanction at Governors Island," he sent his written dictum.

In it John Hughes stated, "No Catholic can attend at any religious worship of any other denomination without violating a principle of his Religion and of course a principle of his Conscience." He pointed out "that since God does not allow us to act against conscience in any case, and since a Catholic would act against conscience in attending at the religious worship of any denomination different from that which he believes to be the Church of Christ, he cannot consistently with conscience attend such worship." He admitted that "to what extent the individual may be excusable when, yielding to the force of necessity he violates the letter of this principle, is not easy for human judgement to determine."

However, as though sympathetic with the professor's own Catholic stand, Bishop Hughes admitted, "that if it were lawful in any case for a Catholic to violate this principle, it would be in reference to the denomination of which you are a minister, as being of all separated communions, the one which approaches nearest to what he regards as the true faith." [6] This McVickar recognized as in keeping with the liberal tendencies of Pope Pius IX and his friendly gestures toward the Anglican communion.

The Anglo-Catholics in England with whom John McVickar had identified himself had in several cases been won over by the appeasing attitude of their Roman brothers. A much publicized case was that of the professor's friend, John Henry Newman, who, two years after resigning from his church near Oxford, had been received into the Roman Catholic communion, within which in the course of another thirty-four years he was to be created a cardinal. In New York, Carey's high churchmanship, about which Archbishop Whately of Dublin had complained to McVickar, went so far as to draw hostile criticism on all Catholic practices within the Episcopal Church. It was said that John McVickar's own daughter Mary, whose invalid condition caused him to give up vacationing at Constableville for a nearer summer residence on Staten Island, refrained from "going over to Rome" only out of regard for her father's position.

* * *

It had taken many deep searchings on the ethical and religious implication of war before McVickar could throw the strength of his conviction into his work as chaplain, and he had corresponded on this issue with such men of mature judgment as Leonard Woods, the president of Bowdoin College, in Maine. Woods wrote to McVickar regarding what he termed a growing commitment toward "pacificism." He told Professor McVickar he had been reading Carlyle's *Cromwell,* which had been published in England a short time ago. It suggested to him "a good many thoughts on a subject we have frequently conversed about, the true and Christian light in which war is to be viewed, viz. as an instrument of divine government over the world and a means of executing the temporal justice of God." The Cromwellian conscience of a "commission to inflict the judgements of Heaven" seemed to Woods "to agree with the Old Testament Captains and to stand almost alone among those of modern times."

From McVickar's point of view it was a satisfaction to have Woods write further, "I confess that after all the weak and morbid sentimentalism which one is compelled to hear nowadays on the subject of war, it is refreshing to come upon any trace of this old manly & religious conception." He went on to note that there was something of it in several passages in Arnold's *Rome,* the history McVickar had been instrumental in introducing to America.[7]

When the break with Mexico was announced on May 13, 1846, McVickar's doubts were resolved. Since war was inevitable he was convinced the church should strengthen and console the soldiers engaged in fighting for their country's cause. In this he had the understanding sympathy of religious-minded officers at the post such as General Winfield Scott and the remarkably handsome Captain Robert Edward Lee, beardless, blackhaired and not yet forty, who was ferried to Governors Island by a Whitehall boatman soon after war with Mexico was declared.[8] Since Robert E. Lee had been stationed for the past five years at the nearby forts of Hamilton and Wadsworth he was a familiar figure on Governors Island. A churchman and architect as well as chief engineer for the area, Lee was ready to cooperate with McVickar in building a chapel on the island. He was, however, among those soon to join Scott's expedition to Mexico.

McVickar resolved nevertheless to proceed with the construction of a fitting building for his services, and for this he received the permission of Colonel Bankhead, the alternate post commander. After many conferences he decided in the absence of General Scott to write direct to the War Department in Washington for confirmation of the "permission granted me for the erection of a chapel on the island." The secretary of war under Polk was a former governor of New York, William Learned Marcy. McVickar knew him only as one of the "Albany Regency" whose policies had been responsible for the phrase, "spoils system."

He explained to Marcy that "a site has been selected, the money is ready, a small neat plan approved." At the same time the reverend chaplain made it clear that "before commencing it is deemed but just the Department should so far recognize individual rights as to grant a lease, revocable at pleasure by the Government, of the ground it occupies together with a right of removing the building by those who erect it." [9]

Thomas Sidney Jesup, who had resumed his duties as quartermaster general at Washington in 1838 after two years with the troops operating against the Indians in the Creek River country, replied immediately. He recommended "that permission be given to put up a building for a chapel on Governors Island on the conditions proposed, but without subjecting the government to any claim for payment for the building under any circumstances whatsoever, unless Congress shall by a special appropriation sanction such payment." [10] Thus it was on the Fourth of July, seventy years after the Declaration of Independence, that John McVickar's proposition was "approved" by the secretary of war.

"With an energy and devotion characteristic of him," Morgan Dix recorded, McVickar "set about building the chapel; sought the aid of friends among New York churchmen, contributed largely of his own means; and planned an appropriate structure in Gothic style." [11] According to McVickar's specifications this building was constructed altogether of plank, so that it might if necessary be moved.[12]

He was soon able to report that "at the single post of Fort Columbus more than 1,500 Prayer Books have been distributed within the last three months, and in every case men desiring it. Out of the California regiment of 800 men, not a man was found to decline the gift, most were zealous for it—while of the officers, not one but was prompt to acknowledge the value of the Prayer Book, as well for its direct aid to discipline as for its deeper spiritual use—they go thus provided every man with his Prayer Book and the settled resolution repeatedly expressed of using it in public worship on board their respective ships." [13]

Before their embarkation Chaplain McVickar assembled the regiment in the shelter of the still unfinished chapel to remind them that as they bore their country's ensign they also bore their country's honor. "Let it not be said," he urged, "that with Americans, might was the measure of right, or that gold outweighed justice, or that the soldier's sword made heavy the scale of a vanquished enemy's ransom. Rather let that name be known as one of blessing wherever it is heard, even as that of a teacher appointed of Heaven to instruct the nations of the earth; to exhibit to the world the living proof how liberty may dwell united with law, how individual freedom may stand linked together with public order, and christian faith in the nation walk hand in hand with an unfettered private conscience." This exhortation was so stirring that it was later published in a twelve-page handbook as *Rev. Dr. McVickar's Address to the California Regiment* and widely distributed.[14]

One effect of McVickar's ministration was a general demand that a chaplain be allowed to accompany a subsequent expedition to the West Coast, and shortly before embarkation the secretary of war wrote from Washington giving Colonel J. D. Stevenson "permission to have the Rev. Mr. Leavenworth go out with the N.Y. Volunteers." There was at the time considerable ill feeling between the secretary and General Scott, who had been ordered to Mexico with full powers. Perhaps for this reason, in yielding his consent that a chaplain "be taken on board one of the Transports," William Marcy advised the colonel that he had "no authority to allow him any compensation or to permit his subsistence to be taken from the public supplies." [15] Such obstacles were overcome, however, and McVickar persuaded the members of this semi-military colony to determine on daily prayers on shipboard under the chaplain's direction during the six month voyage around the Horn.

It was a satisfaction to John McVickar to feel that when Stevenson's contingent arrived in California, their morale would to some extent have been strengthened by what he had been able to do for them as chaplain on Governors Island. He was convinced that the prayer books they carried with them would "bring before them the Church of Christ in a form more sound and spiritual than they have been accustomed to." [16]

CHAPTER 6

A House Divided

A Shrine for Soldiers on Governors Island . . .
Civil War and the Hatteras Prisoners

HAD there been no Governors Island in McVickar's life, a certain side of his character would have remained unexpressed. In academic and ecclesiastical circles he had always labored for the welfare of the "common" man and the education of his children, but he had never "come to grips" with the uncultured laborer. On Governors Island he had the companionship of a few friends such as Winfield Scott and Robert E. Lee, but for the most part he worked with a group of rough men who presented a desert to his planting of education and religious instruction. In building his chapel of planks floated across the bay, all he could ask for his Gothic architecture was "humility and reverence." And such was the exposure of the windswept island that he was forced to build, as Frank Lloyd Wright might have, "rather with the elements than under models." He even built as living quarters what must have been modern in those days, "a California House." The island was during several important years McVickar's "place that nobody else ever bothered." Yet there he addressed an audience which carried his gospel of patience and persistence to and beyond the expanding borders of the nation.

"My church goes on beautifully," McVickar wrote his son Henry, who was in 1847 a missionary to the Indians near Lake George. He was referring to the cruciform chapel on Governors Island with the symbol of the cross on its belfry and on each of its four gables. "It grows upon me every time I see it," he went on, explaining that the building had, "beyond any little church I know, the two elements I want in a rural house of God—humility and reverence."

John McVickar admitted that his design was "something against architectural rule," but the fact was he had "chosen to work rather with the *elements* than under *models,* and thus to work out the same problem by original methods. I look to the effect, and work it out as I can. This is great talk for a little church, but," he assured his son, "I think you will like it. As to cost it will sum up, when finished to near $2,500. What I can raise by the help of friends I will; what I cannot I must bear, and hold it a consecrated gift laid on God's altar, a trespass-offering for years of over-devotion to the acquisition of wealth." [1]

The truth was that before starting the venture McVickar had endeavored to make requisitions for a chapel building from the federal government without success. However, the corporation of Trinity Chuch, which had so often backed his enterprises, considered for a time his application proposing to style the building the *Trinity Church Mission Chapel* but in the end merely referred it to their standing committee with little encouragement.[2] When the edifice was near completion, McVickar made a final appeal through the church press, stating the two thousand dollars had been already expended, and asking for the balance of five hundred dollars from the hearts and hands of churchmen. He made it clear that the fact of its being an Episcopal Church was "not as a monopoly, but as a privilege so long as there are churchmen there desiring its services; the field of christian benevolence to soldiers is still free to others as to us." [3]

A week before the day set for the consecration Trinity voted five hundred dollars "toward defraying the expense." Thus on Monday morning, April 19, 1847, at ten o'clock the ferry which ran from Whitehall to Hamilton Avenue, Brooklyn, was deployed to convey to Governors Island a distinguished group of civilians from New York. On arrival they were formally received by Chaplain McVickar and his fellow officers of the post. In the columns of the *New York American* appeared a description of how, preceded by the band of music belonging to the fort, a large number of students of the Episcopal Theological Seminary led the way followed by a score of clergy in ecclesiastical vestments. These formed a guard of honor for the bishop of Western New York who was to act as consecrator. Finally came Professor McVickar as "the United States military chaplain of the fort," and officers in command.[4]

On reaching the church "which stood in a conspicuous location on the island so as to be visible to all the shipping entering the harbor," the procession passed through the west door, repeating the twenty-fourth Psalm. The instrument of donation was then presented by John McVickar to the bishop, William Heathcote DeLancey, who with Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright and William Muhlenberg were seated in the chancel. There followed the usual prayer of consecration by the bishop, and the newspaper concluded its report, "the sentence of consecration was read by the Rev. Dr. McVickar, the chaplain of the fort." The chapel was entirely filled, and among the congregation was a large detachment of soldiers who, according to the reporter, "in twenty-four hours from the time will be on their way to join the troops now in charge of the Castle of San Juan D'Ulloa at Vera Cruz." So began the chapel of St. Cornelius the Centurian, venerated as the first Christian soldier.[5]

Morgan Dix, who was then in Professor McVickar's junior class at Columbia, bore witness that the chapel was adequate in every respect. Reflecting the personal quality of McVickar's contact with the soldiers was a letter written him on his sixtieth birthday by one of them from the scene of a recent battle. "Thinking that your daughters might like some memento of the memorable battle of Buena Vista," the soldier ventured to send "a few flowers which I gathered near the spot where the gallant Colonel Clay fell." He then went on to say that he was "happy to hear that your chapel is completed on the island. We are indebted entirely to your energy and perserverance in accomplishing so desirable an object."[6]

As John McVickar pondered the hours of waiting as well as of fighting required of these boys he had come to know, he was gratified by the thought that the Bibles, prayer books, and other literature he had been able to place in their hands would console and instruct them. When he had asked the Bible and Common

Prayer Book Society for a grant of Bibles for officers of the army on the eve of embarkation for Mexico, they had acceded generously and asked him to consider a design distinguishing the volumes. He complied by affixing the seal of the Society and also added a personal reminder of the little chapel on Governors Island where they had received it.[7]

A letter written on May 24 in San Francisco by the chaplain McVickar had sent out with the California Regiment finally brought him news of their safe arrival. The Reverend J. J. Leavenworth felt he had made a prosperous beginning and looked forward to the time when he could give his "whole time to the duties of my holy calling. The church will be well planted in Sonora, San Francisco, Puebla and Monterey with ample lands and soon missionaries will be called for. Oregon calls aloud." In a postscript he added, knowing it would gratify McVickar, that he had "organized a Sunday School in San Francisco." [8]

The war with Mexico was concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. From Mexico City four days later McVickar's fellow worker in the field, Chaplain John McCarthy, wrote to thank him for his encouragement. It had been in February of the past year that Congress had passed an act empowering officers to "employ some proper person" to serve as brigade chaplain, yet, McCarthy complained, "I have been the only chaplain with the army under Genl Scott until some few weeks ago when the Revd M. Goss of the Baptist Society came out with the Kentucky Volunteers." Goss, he noted, had relieved him of "the services I had performed for the volunteers."

McCarthy went on to explain that his own labors and services, which had at first been confined to a brigade, were now extended to the whole army. His responsibilities included "visiting the sick in all the hospitals & performing religious services in all the wards & burying the dead of my own brigade & of all the regiments wherever requested." At the time of writing, he told McVickar he had in the regular army eleven hospitals to visit. The number of the sick report in that city, he explained, "exceeds three thousand men, besides I have some 3 or 4 funerals every day. I suppose I have attended well nigh 400 funerals, having performed the service at one time over the remains of 117 officers & men the day after the sanguinary battle of Mollono Del Rey."

The chaplain further reported to McVickar that he "very generally had two services & preached twice every Lord's Day & have administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of every month." Referring to the senior general in command as "our good Genl Scott," McCarthy declared that he had "always manifested a proper interest in regard for the services of religion & a desire to have the officers & soldiers attend, setting them in this as in other respects a good, a christian example." [9] This was an understanding John McVickar had with his friend, Winfield Scott, when they instituted the chaplaincy on Governors Island.

The conquest of Mexico, which fixed the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of Texas, added further territory for the United States. It was later divided into the states of California, Nevada, Utah, parts of Colorado and other adjacent states, almost all of New Mexico and Arizona north of the Gila River, but it was of small personal profit to the soldiers who had won the victory. In New York a Fourth of July concert at Castle Garden for the benefit of the New York volunteers "returned from the front and now in distress" (to which Chaplain McVickar lent his support) implied their inadequate compensation.

Sarah McVickar wrote her brother in March 1850, "Father went over to Bedloe's Island today,—fortunately there was not much wind but by the rattling of the windows I think it must be high. He talks now of putting up a California House upon a corner of Ch. ground at Governors Island for his men or if need be for himself." Before she had finished the letter, however, she could write that "father came home in excellent spirits, says he thinks he will spend next Sunday at Bedloe's Island. He has a Bible class among the men now of 13 and is about to put up a house upon the ch. ground for his man cook & his wife." To this McVickar added a note to explain that "as to Chaplaincy there has been war on the island & the Church is the peacemaker—a division has taken place & at present I have two islands, Bedloe's & Governors." [10] Increased military importance produced a rivalry of precedence between the island once assigned to the Dutch governors and the smaller island which was later to be marked with the Statue of Liberty.

* * *

The value of John McVickar's experience as senior chaplain of the United States Army increased with the years of devoted service. His contribution to the expansion of the chaplaincy system was to become even more significant with the outbreak of the Civil War. The neglected status of army chaplains had led McVickar to extend his interest in the chaplaincy movement far beyond the limited scope of his duties on Governors Island. He had encouraged other clergymen to enter the field of service with him, and early in the spring of 1854 he had appealed to the senator from New York for official recognition. In acknowledging his letter Senator Hamilton Fish advised McVickar that he had "conversed with Genl Shields, the chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate, respecting their application." He favored the idea of making adequate provision for chaplaincies and assured McVickar he intended "to move a proposition (allowing them the pay of a Captain) upon the Army Appropriation Bill," and promised that he would "give such aid as shall be within my power to the proposition."

Ironically, this triumph in achieving a more professional standing for army chaplains had unfortunate consequences for McVickar at Columbia. Hamilton Fish, as a trustee of Columbia, began to protest McVickar's dual position of professor and chaplain. Templeton Strong's reaction to this was that Fish was not even a "cat-fish" but what he termed "a kitty-fish or minnow under average size. His solemn demonstration, continued from the last meeting," Strong went on to note, "against poor old Mack's chaplaincy at Governor's Island as a 'professional employment' in violation of our statutes, was a flap and splash of a very small fish indeed, if only because Mac in his glazed cap, giving everybody a semi-military, semi-clerical salute, is too ridiculous to be gravely treated! A sort of nineteenth century Knight Templar. The calibre of this august board," he added, referring to the Columbia trustees, "is really very small indeed." [11]

The president of Columbia was questioned on the matter and reported to the trustees "that Professor McVickar is employed as a chaplain in the U.S. Army and is to receive pay therefor," adding however, "that Professor Anthon and Drisler teach in the grammar school," for which they also received additional stipends.[12] McVickar's immediate reply to the Columbia trustees was to remind them that his "first inquiry, previous to acceptance" of the professorship in 1817 "was whether its duties would interfere with my preaching and other ministerial services on the Lord's day, and was distinctly told they would not." With this understanding, over a period of thirty-seven years scarce a Sunday had passed in which he had not been engaged for at least part of the day, gratuitously or otherwise. As for his present occupation on Sunday, ("for to that day," he declared, "all my duties are confined") his work on Governors Island was missionary but not gratuitous.[13] McVickar won his point and continued to carry out his Sunday duties on Governors and Bedloe's Islands.

In December 1860 McVickar had exciting news for his son's family in Irvington. It was about "our young people's safe arrival some hours aftertime, having met with delay and been saved from imminent danger in crossing a bridge while burning." Prof Mac's grandchildren had by chance been returning home on the same train which was scheduled to bring the President-elect of the United States and his secretary of state on their official visit to New York. As it was told to McVickar, "the bold conductor dashed over the burning bridge, without a minute to spare, through smoke and flame, having many precious souls on board, among others President Lincoln and Secretary Seward." [14] The papers later announced that Abraham Lincoln had decided to remain in Illinois while Seward and his party came on to New York without him.

Among the first things Abraham Lincoln did after his inauguration was to order a more adequate relief expedition sent to Major Robert Anderson, who was commanding the federal forts at Charleston, South Carolina. On Governors Island McVickar heard much dissension as to the action. It was a shock but not a surprise to him to learn of the bombardment of Sumter early on the morning of April 12, 1861, when the relief boats were attempting to reach the island fort. There followed a heroic defense lasting thirty-six hours before Major Anderson was forced to surrender.

It was McVickar's hope that a visit from his friend now returning as the hero of this engagement might help to dispel the indifference to the critical developments in the conflict between North and South. Accordingly, in the latter part of April the officials and students of Columbia College, together with a goodly number of the citizens, were assembled in Forty Ninth Street in front of the college to receive Major Anderson and witness his raising the Stars and Stripes on a pole erected for the purpose. His words, as the national emblem floated from the top of the staff, "God bless that flag," became a rallying slogan. Before the month was out some eight thousand volunteer troops were leaving New York in response to President Lincoln's appeal.[15]

It was more than three months after his flag-raising at Columbia that Major Anderson wrote John McVickar from Cresson Springs in Pennsylvania, where he had been sent to recover his health, to say he was, "thank God, greatly improved since my arrival here." He assured McVickar that his wife and children arrived safely. "Mrs. Anderson desires me to thank you," he added, "as I do also, for your having so often thought of her and for having paid her so many visits during the last winter and spring." This care for the families of service men, especially when they were on active duty, John McVickar observed religiously as part of his chaplain's duties.

Writing on July 22, the day after the battle of Bull Run, Major Anderson noted that "the telegram this morning reports a great battle at and in the vicinity of Manapes Junction. I am very anxious to hear the result. I fear that in consequence of our having so few disciplined troops and so many officers who have no experience, our losses will be very great."

As for the responsibility of the Civil War, Anderson told McVickar that, to his mind, "this matter has been forced upon us—the firing upon my little band at Fort Sumter opened a war from which our Govt could not withdraw. Only one course is now left for us," he went on to state, "to meet all the responsibilities as becomes christians and soldiers—that this civil strife will be attended with incidents which will sadden and sicken the firmest hearts, none who know the decided and sternly bitter determination of our southern enemies can doubt." McVickar was touched by this man who had stood the first brunt of the fighting, when he now wrote to say, "As a people we have so far forgotten our God, that we have justly incurred his wrath." [16]

On the very day the hero of Fort Sumter was writing to thank John McVickar for the invaluable services he had rendered, an act passed Congress to the effect that "Chaplains employed at the military posts, called chaplains' posts, shall be required to reside at the posts." [17] This at last seemed what Hamilton Fish and others, who resented McVickar's holding the dual position of professor and chaplain, had been hoping would unseat him. McVickar drew up a petition for "relief" from the new law and for a time continued as chaplain. His military cap was still hung in his Columbia classroom, as it had been during the Mexican War, where it might serve as a reminder of patriotic duty for visiting trustees as well as for the students.

The Union troops were hard pressed, and the only hope seemed to lie in blockading the southern ports. The entrance to Pamlico Sound on the shore of North Carolina was the first objective, where in late August a small Federal fleet captured Fort Hatteras, and sent the prisoners to Governors Island. A few days later McVickar received a communication from the former librarian of the General Seminary, now bishop of Maryland, on behalf of "the Hatteras prisoners," many of whom had been his former parishioners. Because their captivity was likely to be long, the petitioner was asking "that the churchmen among them may receive the services of our clergy." He felt he could speak for his former bishop in North Carolina, Thomas Atkinson, in urging the claims of these churchmen.

Whittingham sent this request to John McVickar because he believed "that both as chaplain of the U.S. forces in New York harbour (under whose charge I believe these prisoners are placed) and as a leading agent in every truly missionary work to which the church in New York is called, you were the person most likely effectually to take up and back my friend's plea." He counted there were seven hundred among the prisoners likely to be attentive to "a rightly qualified messenger of God." In conclusion Whittingham suggested, "Who can tell how much of the bitterness of our sad quarrel might be extracted by prompt, considerate and tender attention to these Southern brethren in the time of their calamity." [18]

Atkinson had allied his diocese of North Carolina with the newly constituted "Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederated States of America," but McVickar was convinced that an immediate act of cooperation now would help in the future to reunite the two factions of the church. Therefore as chaplain he had not waited for suggestions from either bishop, as was evident from Whittingham's reply from Baltimore on September 18 expressing satisfaction in learning "how thoroughly you had anticipated all I had to ask." [19]

Finally on September 10, 1862, from "Headquarters Fort Columbus N.Y.H." the Colonel of the fifth Infantry sent McVickar under Special Orders No. 89 an announcement that "pursuant to the requirements of the Sec. of an Act to define the pay and emoluments of certain officers of the Army and for other purposes approved July 17, 1862, the Reverend John McVickar, Chaplain of this post is by said Act required to reside at the post. He will therefore without delay report in person to the commanding officer." [20]

Regretful as he was that he must give up his post as chaplain, McVickar reflected that the "frequent Perils & much exposure in open boats & stormy weather" had been justified because his mission had familiarized thousands with "the teaching of the Church & brought many to the open Profession of their Faith in the Holy Sacraments." In its daily schools (one school for young recruits; the other for children) taught by communicants of the church, petty officers approved by himself, McVickar felt he had been able to give "a Religious & Churchlike character to instruction." He concluded with his annual report, "Baptisms 153, Communicants 333, Marriages 19."

It was three years before another chaplain was commissioned, and the chapel McVickar had built was for some time in danger of secularization. Before his death, however, McVickar had the satisfaction of learning that the corporation of Trinity offered to maintain a chaplain at the post on condition that it should be allowed exclusive use of the building. To this the government willingly agreed. Finally, a handsome stone chapel was erected on the old site and the record of Prof Mac's labor was carved on a sedelia in the chancel: "John McVickar, Priest and Doctor, Chaplain of this Post 1844–1862, By whose wisdom and liberality the first Chapel of St. Cornelius the Centurian was erected in 1846," adding in words of tribute, "The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips."

CHAPTER 7

A House Uniting

Postwar Mediator . . . Presiding Over a Diocese

THE otherwise cheery Christmas letter from New York in 1860 concluded with Professor McVickar's admission that he was "the only one of the household not quite bright, suffering from what I thought I never had, a severe cold got with running about on our severest day to get together the Standing Committee, at the call of the Bishop, for urgent business." Elected in 1834, John McVickar had been for almost thirty years a member of the standing committee which guided the affairs of the vast diocese of New York with increased authority during the absence or suspension of bishops. In 1863, since he was deprived of the military chaplaincy, he felt impelled to put in more time as president of this diocesean committee.

Among the things with which McVickar was particularly to deal as president of the standing committee was the matter of diocesean finance. In this he enlisted the interest of wealthy laymen. Ferdinand Sands, for example, had married one of William Bard's daughters and the Sands fund was an important addition to the treasury of the New York diocese at that time. Furthermore, there were at least a dozen city clergymen for whom McVickar preached and whom he helped in parochial problems during this winter.[1] "He was one of the best preachers I heard in my early days," Arthur Cleveland Coxe (successor to DeLancey as bishop of Western New York) later recalled. It was in 1863 that Coxe came from Baltimore to be rector of Calvary, one of McVickar's early foundations, and in those days he was struck with the fact that the professor's "sermons were most instructive and were delivered from the pulpit with a critical use of language and a command of his subject which made me look upon him and feel what a glorious thing it is to be a minister of Christ." [2]

The ministry of preaching was of importance in keeping up the morale of the people in the crisis which faced the nation in 1864. McVickar's years of experience made his sermons a benediction to many. In March he was asked to preach by Peter Schermerhorn Chauncey, the rector of St. James, then a frame church with a quaint belfry and a horse shed at the back. Later Prof Mac wrote William that he "was with Dr. Chauncey last Sunday, in an old wooden church my father united in building almost sixty years ago, and which I had hardly seen since I was a boy; and as I sat on the half fallen willows of that age, I preached a more effective sermon to myself than it is likely I did to others within the building." But the rector wrote later to assure him that his "words reached many hearts." [3]

John McVickar pressed the larger interests of the church as well, and introduced the system of Provincial Synods in which several dioceses should convene together as a province. He had written Bishop DeLancey on the matter in August, but his letter arrived just after the convention of Western New York had adjourned "so that your suggestion being too late," the bishop advised McVickar "no mention of provinces was made." [4] It was typical of the professor's persistence that reform such as this which he felt were for the general good were never allowed to rest.

The same paper in which John McVickar read the account of Lincoln's second inauguration in 1865 told of Grant encircling Lee at Richmond and Sherman marching into North Carolina. Then in April came the surrender of the Confederate Army, followed almost immediately by the assassination of the President. It was a dramatic finale to the seventy-eight years McVickar had lived between the formation of the Constitution and the trial by fire through which it had just passed.

The conflict between the states had had inevitable repercussions within the Church. And just as unity was the prime objective of the nation following the end of the war, so it was the objective of the divided Church. To McVickar, the conciliation of the southern and northern branches of the Church and the political conciliation of the states were one and the same. Above all the nation needed spiritual healing, and this he saw as the responsibility of the churches. As chairman of the governing committee of the dominant diocese of the Episcopal Church and as former senior chaplain of the United States Army, he was peculiarly fitted to champion this cause. As a speaker and organizer, as well as a personal friend of leaders on both sides, he was able to make his influence felt.

To his son William he wrote, "Our church is advancing as she has never done before with national strides." He referred specifically to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church being held in Philadelphia as a national blessing in that it was proving to be a great element in the conciliation of the South. The new bishops from that quarter impressed McVickar as "powerful persuaders."

Charles Todd Quintard, for example, who had received an M.D. from New York University and gone south to teach physiology and pathological anatomy at the Memphis Medical College, came north after the war to this General Convention and was consecrated second bishop of Tennessee. Bishop Fulford of the Church of England in Canada had come down from Montreal, and from the northern states came the bishops of Vermont, Maine, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Western New York. With them Bishop Atkinson of North Carolina, whose parishioners McVickar had cared for in the prison camp, joined in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

At this General Convention McVickar was gratified by the unexpected courtesy afforded him by the bishops. He was invited the first day to lunch with them in their private room, and, as he humorously noted, "greeted on my introduction as 'Bishop of Governors Island.' " John McVickar's activities as a senior military chaplain and especially his ministrations to the needs of southern prisoners made him now a key figure in reuniting the American people in "one nation under God." "The next day," according to his account, he "dined with the bishops at their hotel, myself the only 'undignified' member, and, worst of all, being called on, English fashion, for an after-dinner speech."

" 'My Lord Bishop of Montreal' who presided was very complimentary on the occasion," Prof Mac wrote his son, "and proffered many courtesies." McVickar's chief suggestion to the convention was the "provincial system." The committee to which it was referred had as its chairman Milo Mahan, who was there representing Maryland. McVickar had known him both as professor at the General Theological Seminary and as editor of the Anglo-Catholic *Church Journal.* The result was that permission for this important reform was granted to the dioceses of New York and Pennsylvania, which, as McVickar admitted, "was all we hoped for." In the course of a few years, the provincial system was inaugurated by a meeting in New York City of bishops and delegates from five dioceses. This is now counted a valuable factor in national church government.

"Bishop Quintard, after his consecration, came on here," McVickar wrote on his return to New York, "when a new bond arose between us on learning from him that he was one of my own 'Trinity School' scholars, and as I was aiding him in his first service here he brought with him his old teacher, Dr. William Morris." [5] Quintard, an adherent of the Oxford Movement although not an extremist, returned home to establish the University of the South at Sewanee during the course of the following year.

The close of the Civil War brought a strong impulse for unity among all churches. Professor McVickar had long been active in emphasizing the union between the Eastern Orthodox and Anglican communions. On March 2 of this year, 1865, Templeton Strong recorded one of the public demonstrations McVickar had arranged in New York. "Trinity Chapel well filled this morning for the Russian service," Strong wrote down. "Part of the chapel reserved for Russians, Greeks and Orientals of whom there were fifty or sixty. The officiating priest, Father Agapias, was in handsome robes. Ogilby says this is the first time the Liturgy of St. Chrisostom has been heard in a Western church (excepting, of course, chapels of embassies at Paris or other Western capitals) since the great schism between Eastern and Western

Christendom," adding in the light of what he had learned from Prof Mac, "a step toward Catholic unity."

"McVickar tells me," the diary went on, "he found the hard-headed old Scotch sexton of Trinity Chapel quite sulky this morning over the proposed service. Clarke thought it was to be something Popish, and felt conscientious scruples about being accessory thereto. Whereupon Professor McVickar opened a heavy fire on him, with the Council of This and the Council of That, the 'Mother Church of Jerusalem' and the 'Mission Church of Rome,' and the orthodoxy of the Oriental communities and their enmity to the Pope. Clear he was satisfied, or stunned, and said he was glad to learn it was all right, and said he would be happy to countenance the service." In later years this edifice was given over to the Serbian Orthodox Church to be used as the Cathedral of St. Sava.

* * *

In his closing days, when most of his contemporaries had ceased their active service, McVickar's character and ability were put to their severest test. To make it possible for the bishop to attend the first Lambeth Conference, McVickar took over his executive responsibilities in New York. That they included the creation of two new dioceses and settling some of the bitterest disputes within the church doubtless taxed his strength, but in Bishop Potter's words his "full & vigorous grasp of principles, worthy of the best days of middle life" enabled him to surmount the difficulties.

On January 18, 1866, John McVickar wrote of himself as "in varied duties at home & abroad, pretty equally divided tho at present adding the novel one of sitting for my portrait requested by the Trustees to be hung in the library. The painter Mr. Eaton esteemed the best." [6] The head and shoulders of John McVickar as Joseph Oriel Eaton painted him was to remain long in the minds of men who had never attended his courses or known him in his virile years. His hair, now grey with his almost eighty years, was thinner but still worn long over the ears, according to the fashion of his youth. The high broad forehead bespoke his noble intellect, and his blue eyes framed by slightly drooping lids appeared long and narrow under heavy brows. The expression of serious contemplation fitted the professor's aging face, but for those who knew, Prof Mac's engaging smile and his merry whistle were still there.[7]

The closer union between the Anglican communions in Britain and America, which had become an ambition with John McVickar on his visit to England in 1830, had been stimulated by his association with the leaders of the Anglo-Catholic movement in that country. Matters had now come to a head in a conference being called by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his London residence. John McVickar urged full cooperation on the part of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

On May 2, 1867, Templeton Strong recorded a meeting of the "Standing Committee of the diocese this evening at Dr. McVickar's, 21 West 32nd Street;—a letter from the bishop asking the counsel of the committee whether he should attend the proposed meeting of a 'Pan-Anglican' council at Lambeth in September and what he should do about the meeting of the diocesean convention on the 26th of that month. We advised him to attend the council and to issue a recommendation to the convention to organize on the 26th and then adjourn to some day in November."

Bishop Potter, in writing of his official visit to the church McVickar had erected in Irvington, spoke of "crowding my work up in order to leave the country." The old leisure which McVickar could remember of driving with Bishop Hobart in a horse and wagon to visit parishes and mission stations, had now given place to the time-table era of the new railroads. "In my present circumstances," Potter explained in answer to McVickar's suggestion of hospitality, he did only "necessary things as far as I can; but I have no time for luxuries." So he instructed the rector of Irvington to "please put me at such an hour, say 7 P.M. or 7½ that I can certainly reach Tarrytown for the 9:28 P.M. train down," emphasizing in the new American spirit "my time will be precious."

Horatio Potter's departure to attend the first Lambeth Conference in England was made possible because of his confidence in John McVickar's ability as president of the standing committee to carry on the affairs of the diocese of New York in his months of absence. "I have again to go down to the city this week to organize the business of the diocese," McVickar wrote to his son William on July 16, "the Bishop having sailed for England and made our committee the 'Ecclesiastical authority' to call the convention and arrange matters." [8]

This convention of well over four hundred clergy meeting in New York City had among the important matters on its agenda the creation of two new dioceses, those of Long Island, where the ancestors of John McVickar's mother had been among the founders of the Episcopal Church, and Albany or Central New York, where the church she had herself built at Turin was among the seventy-five parishes.[9]

At the convention over which he presided, McVickar had the satisfaction of rendering a report on the expansion of St. Stephen's College, reminding the delegates that "this church Institution may be said to be the child of the Society for Promoting Religion and Learning," in which he had been a leading spirit for some forty years. McVickar offered the students of St. Stephen's at this time a new scholarship and an annual prize of fifty dollars for elocution, to make them "correct and effective readers, both from the desk and pulpit, which so few of our young clergy are." [10] This scholarship of three thousand dollars was made permanent by John McVickar's will, together with another of like amount for the most deserving scholar in the first and second classes at Trinity School, in which McVickar continued to hold positions of responsibility.

Soon after McVickar had returned to his country house at Irvington, Alfred Stubbs, the rector of an important parish in New Jersey, wrote him that he had come "to the city this morning to put you in possession, as President of the S. Comm. now the ecclesiastical authority of New York, of a communication from the Bishop of New Jersey." According to Stubbs, his bishop was now referring to the New York diocese a presentment made to him in regard to the Reverend Stephen H. Tyng Jr. "violating the laws of the church" in the parish of New Brunswick, New Jersey. This sensational case was a test of the professor's patience and wisdom.[11]

After Bishop Potter's return from abroad, he wrote McVickar on Christmas day by way of greeting, "This one line today just to express to you my affectionate regard." He wanted John McVickar to know that he felt grateful to him for some "clear & strong expressions yesterday," and declared that he was particularly struck with his "full & vigorous grasp of principles, worthy of the best days of middle life—a tone of thought which has characterized you through all your long career." [12]

The professor began to see a possibility of crystallizing his long cherished plan of the cathedral system. The idea of a Gothic cathedral for New York might not have to wait, for he was given to understand that Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street "is to pay off its half million debt through the Astor lots; with the remainder to make Trinity church building cruciform and cathedral-like, and" he added "if I have a word to say, to have a bishop's home as a visible centre of church influence in the city." [13]

But John McVickar was reaching the end of his life's span. He had word from Italy of the death of his colleague, Charles King, who had striven with him for the creation of a greater Columbia. He had seen a tablet placed in the chapel to commemorate the services of his former neighbor in the old Columbia buildings, Charles Anthon, whose clear, sonorous voice he would hear no more. And now, Prof Mac wrote, "for myself, my time is short; my strength fails, but not my health. I still keep up my small work in the church and its societies, in most of which I am still the presiding officer, and always," here he inserted a question mark, "at my post." But he added, "It is a great comfort to me to find them all successful." Then, mindful of the controversies through which they were passing he observed, "As to church questions I do not trouble myself, being content to teach as I practice—*Be faithful in your own work,* and all will be well." [14]

Final Tribute

The history books which deal with military and political leaders and date their important events from battles and revolutions will find little space for such men as John McVickar. Yet the course of history is often directed by a hidden hand on the steering wheel. Only when that hand is taken away is the full import of its power felt. Surely the greatest tribute to John McVickar may be found in the fact that the manifold projects he initiated as an educator, a political economist, and a man of the church were so boldly and intelligently conceived that they have continued in various forms up to this day.

The last year of John McVickar's life seemed to him full of promise. The purchase of the vast area of Alaska had now added to the problem of continental government, but he was confident that the rapid progress in laying the rails of the Central and Union Pacific Lines and in other means of improved communication was drawing the American people together. In New York City new market facilities were about to be opened, concrete pavements were projected, and the old Grand Central Depot at Madison Avenue and Twenty Sixth Street was being talked of as obsolete and too far downtown.

There was an interim during the winter of 1868 when Prof Mac saw his son William take over the temporary charge of Grace Church, Broadway, as he himself had done twice before. He highly approved the offer of the rectorship of this church to Henry Codman Potter, nephew of the bishop of New York. In the library of Grace Church, three years after McVickar's death, Codman Potter revived and, with the aid of Muhlenberg, McClure Peters, Phillips Brooks, and a few others, carried on the tradition of what is to the present day known as the "Club."

When Codman Potter eventually succeeded his uncle as bishop of New York he was to lay the foundation stone for the great cathedral of John McVickar's early dreams.

As president of the standing committee the professor's advice was constantly sought. For instance, the moving of St. Thomas Church uptown prompted its rector to consult McVickar in what he described as "his elegant country seat in the village of Irvington on the Hudson." William Morgan spoke of enjoying the professor's "rich and instructive conversation on the sheltered piazza." To be sure, he found McVickar in the last year of his life "tottering with age," but it made his natural kindness and consideration more evident because, Morgan observed, "infirm as he was, he insisted that I should accompany him over the superb grounds which surrounded the house." Morgan was impressed with the "mellowness and serene cheerfulness of his closing years" and noted McVickar's "interest and alacrity in current affairs and duties." In short, the St. Thomas rector summed up his analysis of John McVickar as "in the fullest meaning of the term, a finished Christian gentleman."

In the summer of 1868 professor McVickar was taken so seriously ill that it was thought best to bring him down to a house near the old family estate in Bloomingdale. Although this put him within a short drive of the city, when it came time for the annual diocesean convention early in October, he was not able to attend. Horatio Potter in his bishop's address informed the delegates, "Our venerable and honored presbyter retires from the official station which he has so long and ably filled as president of the Standing Committee—the Rev. John McVickar, D.D., for half a century a professor in Columbia College—what a historical name in this diocese! How steadfast in his principles, how far reaching in his views and how elevated in all his thoughts and sentiments." [1]

Templeton Strong wrote in his diary that "old Professor McVickar is dying of old age and recognizes no one," and on the next day, October 30, he entered, "McVickar died yesterday afternoon at 82." It was on this occasion, more than thirty years after he had first entered McVickar's classroom, that Strong recalled, "Old McVickar's lecture room 1835–38 did more to influence me and mould my way of thinking than any other feature of my college life." [2]

William McVickar told how his father, "surrounded by his surviving children [Sarah Bard, Susan Johnston, and William Augustus] passed quietly away with the oft-reiterated words *Pray, Prayer, Praise* upon his lips." [3]

The Church Journal noted that the Warden of St. Stephens College, "Dr. Fairbairn, paid tribute" to Professor McVickar, saying, "To his suggestions the College had been indebted for its foundation, and generously sacrificing dear plans of his own, he had always shown himself its warm friend and supporter." It seemed fitting a special service should be held at St. Stephens therefore, and Morgan Dix went up to Annandale on All Saints Day to take it. The service, as he described it, was "choral throughout and very fine altar lights at the celebration. I preached" he went on to say, "the students of St. Stephens, upwards of 60 in number formed the choir—came in academic gowns and chanting a processional psalm."

On the following day, November 2, Dix related how "together with Mr. Bard, myself and other friends all the college went down to Hyde Park to attend Dr. McVickar's funeral. Some of us," he said, "went to Poughkeepsie and stayed there till the train came up from town with the body."

But as George Franklin Seymour put it at the time, McVickar "belonged emphatically to the City of New York." Therefore a funeral service was held at Trinity Chapel on the morning before the body was taken to Poughkeepsie. There was a large attendance of citizens, including sixty clergy, the president, faculty, and all the students of Columbia College, and the rector and boys of Trinity School. In the chancel were the bishops of New York, Illinois, and California to bear witness to the farreaching influence of John McVickar's active life.[4]

The coffin was taken by train to Hyde Park, where it "was received by the members of St. Stephen's College drawn up in double line in their full academic dress. The slow procession wound up the hill from the station to the little Gothic church which marked the beginning of Prof Mac's career. Then after the service they proceeded to the adjacent burial ground.

"The afternoon was dark and stormy, the sky grey, and at intervals snow fell on the open prayer books," the rector of Trinity recalled. "As we went along the full body of men's voices sang "Jerusalem the Golden" with an almost unearthly effect." The Reverend Samuel Roosevelt Johnson, who had once been rector at Hyde Park, read the committal. "As we turned from the grave," Morgan Dix continued, "the students sang "Who are these in bright array"—the sun, about to set, suddenly blazed forth striking upon the river, and on the distant Kaatskills, and on the church tower and on the grave." [5] There, beside the grave of his wife Eliza Bard, whose miniature he had placed near his pillow every night for the past forty years, and close to Dr. Samuel Bard, whose life had been his pattern, they laid the body of their beloved Prof Mac.

A few days later Bishop Potter called a meeting of the clergy of the City of New York and its vicinity in the Trinity Chapel schoolhouse in tribute to their senior presbyter who had served the church for sixty years. He described John McVickar as "A marked man, a peculiar character, quite distinguished from ordinary men of his class. There is no one of anything like similar qualities and features left to take his place or to remind us of him." [6]

Another generation was to acknowledge John McVickar as a "towering figure" in the history of thought at Columbia, representing an "important type" in the history of American scholarship. And Nicholas Murray Butler (whose term of office as university president came between those of Seth Low and Dwight David Eisenhower), saw Professor John McVickar's service to Columbia as spanning "the long period of discouragement," and placed him foremost among "the strong men who fought the fight which saved this University for the 20th century."

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